



The trading platform you'd build (if you built trading platforms).

Customize your view of the market so you can focus on what's important to you with thinkorswim®. Create your own indicators with thinkScript®, visualize the market with custom charting, and use personal predictions to forecast the values of stocks you care about with the Company Profile tool. And, this award-winning investing experience is now commission-free.*

See what customization can do for your trades at tdameritrade.com/thinkorswim



Where Smart Investors Get SmarterSM

*Applies to U.S. exchange-listed stocks, ETFs, and options. A \$0.65 per contract fee applies for options trades.

Company Profile forecasts are hypothetical, based on user-defined assumptions, and not guaranteed. All investing involves risks, including loss of principal. TD Ameritrade, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. © 2019 TD Ameritrade.

VISIT...

LANZAROTE
Caliente.COM

INTERNATIONAL
**BELARUS
ON THE
BRINK**

p.16 *Alexander
Lukashenko*



MAIN STORIES

The partisan
fight over
the mail

p.7



TALKING POINTS

Who's behind
Kanye's
campaign?

p.19



THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MEDIA

A convention boost

Democrats make their case
for replacing Trump
in the White House

Pages 6, 8

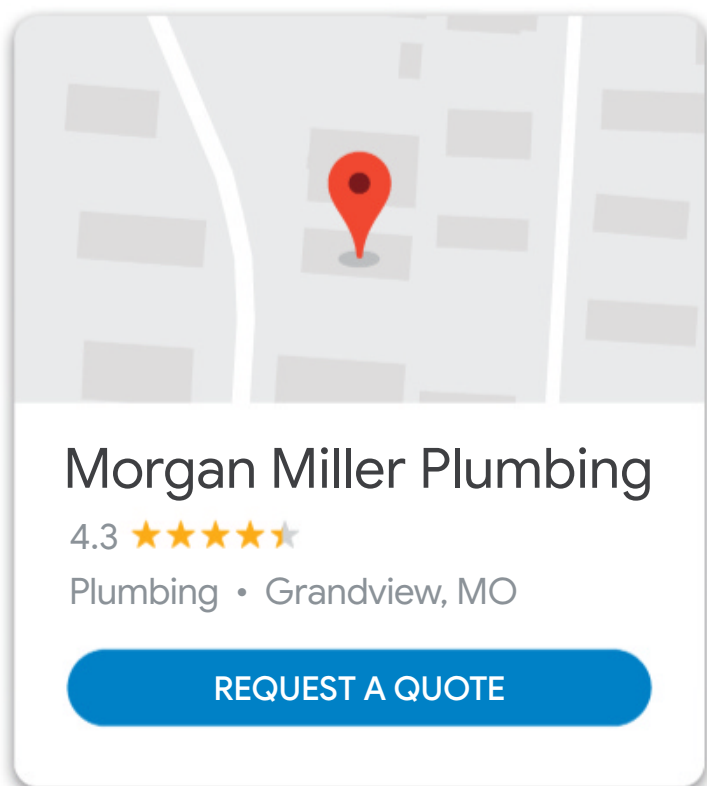


AUGUST 28, 2020 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 990

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT MATTERS

WWW.THEWEEK.COM

Helping local businesses adapt to a new way of working





The employees of Morgan Miller Plumbing pride themselves on being a small, tight-knit family, and they treat their customers the same way.

With a free Business Profile on Google, Morgan Miller Plumbing has been able to reach more customers. And while COVID-19 has presented new challenges, they've been able to adapt. More people are contacting them every week, and they're actively looking to hire additional technicians to help meet demand.

Find free resources for your small business at g.co/smallbusiness

Editor's letter

Last weekend, I decided it was time to upgrade my wheels. For the past few years I've been driving a 1998 Honda Accord, a wonderfully reliable machine that my family has named Betty (because she's white). But on a trip to upstate New York, Betty made clear her objection to climbing mountain roads, and so my wife and I agreed that we should give in and join the SUV club. Because New York City—home to pothole-pocked roads that resemble the surface of the moon and truck drivers who joyfully scrape past parked vehicles—is no place for a new car, I went hunting for a used CR-V or RAV4. I got nowhere. Every dealer I spoke with had sold out of decent and affordable used autos. This isn't just a New York problem; there's a nationwide shortage of used cars. That's partly because the pandemic has slowed the production of new cars, and so buyers are being pushed to the pre-owned market. But it's also because a significant chunk of the population has managed to save money during the pandemic, and some of the

cash they might have splashed on vacations or restaurant meals is instead going toward a new ride.

What's happening on dealership lots is just one sign of our strange split-screen economy. With unemployment stuck above 10 percent, a record number of Americans are falling behind on their auto loans even as many drivers upgrade. Nearly a third of households are now in arrears on their mortgage or rent, and evictions will soon skyrocket. Yet those who've managed to hold on to their jobs are splurging on home improvement. Home Depot notched \$38.1 billion in sales in the second quarter of 2020, up 23 percent from the same period last year. It's estimated that 54 million Americans will struggle to put food on the table this year, yet the S&P 500 just hit a new high, and so people with stock portfolios are enjoying record returns. The U.S. has long been a land of extreme inequality; the pandemic has merely exacerbated that pre-existing condition.

Theunis Bates
Managing editor

NEWS

6 Main stories

The Democratic National Convention; backtracking at the USPS; revelations from a Senate report on 2016 Russian interference

8 Controversy of the week

Will Kamala Harris give the Democratic ticket a boost in November?

9 The U.S. at a glance

A record heat wave in California and the West; violence on the streets of Portland, Ore.

10 The world at a glance

A surge of overdoses in Canada; North Koreans told to surrender their pets

12 People

Kristen Wiig's long road to motherhood; Russia's doping mastermind

13 Briefing

Why the Chinese Communist Party is cracking down on religion

14 Best U.S. columns

Birtherism makes a comeback; shredding climate change regulations

16 Best European columns

Will Russia try to crush the uprising in Belarus?

18 Talking points

A diplomatic win for Trump in the Middle East; QAnon heads to Washington; Kanye West's 2020 campaign



An activist lays flowers at the feet of a Belarusian police officer. (p.16)

ARTS

23 Books

The academic who fell for the tall tale of Jesus' wife

24 Author of the week

Ron Rash on the power of persistence

25 Music & Stage

Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion spark a moral panic

26 Film

Movie theaters' dangerous rush to reopen



Kristen Wiig
(p.12)

LEISURE

28 Food & Drink

A Greek casserole loaded with veg; sauces to elevate your grilling game

29 Consumer

The best face masks for kids; how to prepare your home for a hurricane

BUSINESS

32 News at a glance

The stock market's record high; new U.S. sanctions could cripple Huawei

33 Making money

Confusion over Trump's payroll-tax holiday; tuition discounts at virtual colleges

34 Best columns

Assessing Joe Biden's economic policies; Big Tuna's price-fixing scandal

THE WEEK

Editor-in-chief: William Falk

Managing editors: Theunis Bates, Mark Gimein

Assistant managing editor: Jay Wilkins

Deputy editor/International: Susan Caskie

Deputy editor/Arts: Chris Mitchell

Senior editors: Chris Erikson, Danny Funt, Michael Jaccarino, Dale Obbie, Zach Schonbrun, Hallie Stiller

Art director: Dan Josephs

Photo editor: Mark Rykoff

Copy editor: Jane A. Halsey

Researchers: Joyce Chu, Alisa Partlan

Contributing editors: Ryan Devlin, Bruno Maddox

Chief sales and marketing officer:

Adam Dub

SVP, marketing: Lisa Boyars

Executive account director: Sara Schiano

West Coast executive director: Tony Imperato

Head of brand marketing: Ian Huxley

Director of digital operations &

advertising: Andy Price

Chief executive: Kerin O'Connor

Chief operating & financial officer:

Kevin E. Morgan

Director of financial reporting:

Arielle Starkman

Consumer marketing director:

Leslie Guarnieri

HR manager: Joy Hart

Operations manager: Cassandra Mondoneda

Chairman: Jack Griffin

Dennis Group CEO: James Tye

U.K. founding editor: Jolyon Connell

Company founder: Felix Dennis

Visit us at TheWeek.com.

For customer service go to www.TheWeek.com/service or phone us at 1-877-245-8151.

Renew a subscription at www.RenewTheWeek.com or give a gift at www.GiveTheWeek.com.

THREE CHEERS FOR FREE!

Not feeling so free these days? How about something absolutely stunning that is!



PRAISE FOR STAUER GARNET JEWELRY

"It was beautiful and it made my day. Buy it you won't regret it. Love it!"

— H., Spokane WA

PRAISE FOR STAUER BLUE TOPAZ

"Love at first sight! Without a doubt - one of my favorite pieces from Stauer!"

— N. B., Mattapoisett, MA

Pendants enlarged to show exquisite color. Chain sold separately.

After months of "together time" she deserves something truly special. You do too. How about a genuine gemstone pendant at a price worth raising a glass to— **FREE!***

We can't think of a better way to introduce you to the fine art of affording the extraordinary than with an absolutely extraordinary offer. Delight her with nearly 3 total carats of perfectly-faceted cushion cut genuine gemstones. You pay only \$24⁹⁵, our regular charge for shipping, processing and insurance. *We'll even pay you back with \$30 in Stauer Dollars* to use on future Stauer orders— that's our **Better Than Free Shipping®!**

This awesome deal is a no-brainer. The hard part is deciding which one, so maybe start with her favorite color. Choose from vibrant green Verdant Peridot, golden Champagne Citrine, dreamy Sky Blue Topaz, lush Cabernet Garnet, or decadent Royal Amethyst. Set in .925 sterling silver finished in lustrous gold or in gleaming sterling silver, you really can't go wrong— no matter which gemstone you choose.

"The best color in the whole world is the one that looks good on you." — Gabrielle Bonheur 'Coco' Chanel

Now you could spend nearly \$1,700 on a sterling silver pendant set with just one blue topaz stone. But, with Stauer in your corner, you can give her even more for FREE!

LIMITED AVAILABILITY. No one has an offer that even comes close to this, so we can't guarantee our supplies will last long. Call today for your FREE *Three-Stone Gemstone Pendant* and enjoy oohs and ahhs without the ouch. Call now!

Three-Stone Gemstone Pendant ~~\$299†~~

Choose Peridot, Citrine, Blue Topaz, Red Garnet or Amethyst
Your Pendant Cost With Offer Code — **FREE***

***pay only shipping & processing of \$24⁹⁵ and receive \$30 in Stauer Dollars toward your next order!**

You must use the offer code to get our special free pendant.

1-800-333-2045

Your Insider Offer Code: TSP144-01

Please use this code when you order to receive our free offer.

Stauer®

14101 Southcross Drive W., Ste 155, Dept. TSP144-01,
Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 **www.stauer.com**



Rating of A+

- 3 ctw each: Verdant peridot, Champagne citrine, Sky Blue topaz, Cabernet garnet, Royal amethyst • white zircon accents
- .925 sterling silver or yellow gold-finished .925 sterling silver settings • Chain sold separately

* This offer is valid in the United States (and Puerto Rico) except in TX, FL, CO, OK, RI, NH, WV, OR, SC, VA, ID and CA. These state residents will be charged one cent (\$.01) + shipping & processing for the item. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. Offer subject to state and local regulations. Not valid with any other offers and only while supplies last. This offer is limited to one item per shipping address. † Free is only for customers using the offer code versus the price on Stauer.com without your offer code.

Stauer... Afford the Extraordinary.®

Democrats make their case for Biden

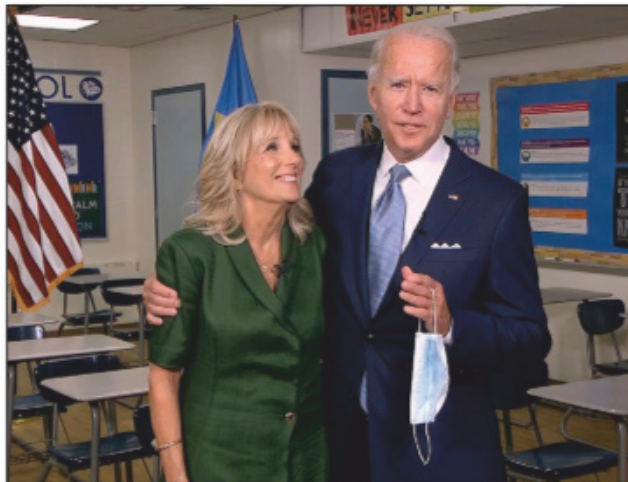
What happened

Democrats formally nominated Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as their presidential ticket this week at a virtual convention featuring a parade of both Democratic and Republican speakers praising Biden's decency and empathy and calling President Trump unfit to lead. Having scrapped plans to gather in Milwaukee, Democrats pivoted to a heavily produced convention with rapid-fire appearances from dozens of participants, plus a colorful "roll call" panorama featuring delegates showing off distinctive scenery in 50 states and seven territories, including the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., fried calamari in Rhode Island, saguaro cacti in Arizona, and a field of cows in Montana. The speaker lineup showcased Biden's broad coalition: Republicans such as former Ohio Gov. John Kasich and Arizona Sen. John McCain's widow, Cindy, along with Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), who said Trump's re-election would be a terrible blow to the progressive movement and the country. "The future of our democracy is at stake," Sanders said. "The price of failure is just too great to imagine."

Biden maintains about an 8-point lead in aggregations of national polls, although a pre-convention CNN poll had his lead cut to 4. In convention speeches, Democrats highlighted Trump's efforts to dismantle the Affordable Care Act, the Covid-19 death toll—now over 170,000—and the pandemic's economic fallout. But the central focus was on character, with videos of Biden greeting Amtrak conductors and an elevator operator, and grieving after family tragedies. *The Week* went to press before Harris and Biden made their addresses, but in early remarks, Biden criticized Trump's pandemic response, saying, "I used to think it was because he was callous, but I think it's because he's just not smart enough." Michelle Obama echoed the dig, saying Trump "is clearly in over his head. He cannot meet this moment."

What the columnists said

The Democrats' urgency to remove Trump from the Oval Office has forged "a temporary truce" between centrists and progressives, said Eric Lach in *NewYorker.com*. In the run-up to the convention, progressives complained about the screen time awarded to party



Biden joins wife, Jill, after her speech.

elders like Bill Clinton while rising star Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) got just 60 seconds. But Democrats clearly fear a repeat of 2016, when Sanders' embittered supporters failed to rally behind Hillary Clinton. To keep the disparate factions under one tent, the party went "light on policy talk" and focused on Trump.

It sure made for dull television, said David Harsanyi in *NationalReview.com*. The convention had a "1980s-telethon vibe," with pre-recorded speeches, canned applause, actresses serving as emcees, and video packages "that could easily have been

Budweiser Super Bowl commercials circa 2005." Without a crowd cheering every line, the "vacuity of it all" was "even more conspicuous." The Democrats' convention message was clear: "Donald Trump bad," said Michael Goodwin in the *New York Post*. Viewers who sat through hours of tedious Obama administration nostalgia were left wondering, "What do Democrats stand for?"

For now, Democrats' spirits are "buoyed" by the polls, said Scott Martelle in the *Los Angeles Times*, but they also point to a danger: a lack of passionate support for Biden. Pew found that 56 percent of voters cite opposition to Trump as their main reason for backing Biden, whereas just 19 percent of Trump supporters are driven by dislike for his opponent. With early voting just six weeks away in several states, "anti-Trump anger" might not be enough to sustain Biden's lead when he comes under Republican attack.

Michelle Obama pinpointed exactly how Democrats feel right now, said Michelle Norris in *WashingtonPost.com*. As gifted an orator as her husband, Obama spoke with calm, confident intensity and offered a "master class" in flipping sexist and racist stereotypes about "angry black women" on their head. She catalogued Trump's egregious failings, particularly in dealing with the pandemic, and then powerfully finished: "He simply cannot be who we need him to be for us," pausing to sigh before adding, "It is what it is." The line was an allusion to Trump's grotesquely callous dismissal of soaring coronavirus deaths and summarized what's at stake in November. Trump "is who he is," and "he won't change unless the fall election delivers him a change of address."

It wasn't all bad

■ A 15-year-old from Jacksonville, Fla., found he could give old machines a new life for kids who couldn't afford a computer. When Christopher Kilpatrick was interning with the electronics recycler Urban Mining this summer, he had an epiphany: Why not take some of the retired machines that Urban Mining got from businesses and refurbish them instead of ripping them into salvaged parts? The teen refurbished 20 desktops and donated them to the nonprofit Big Brothers, Big Sisters. "I like the feeling I am making a difference," said Kilpatrick.

■ At 103 years of age, Dorothy Pollack decided to check an item off her bucket list: a frog tattoo. Pollack had been living in a retirement home, but her grandson pulled her out when he found he couldn't even take her out "for a burger and beer" on her birthday. "After being in Covid-19 prison, I thought it was time to start living again," Pollack said. So earlier this month, Teresa Jones, her grandson's girlfriend, took her to a tattoo parlor in Muskegon, Mich., as a celebration of her newfound freedom. After getting inked, Pollack hopped on the back of Jones' friend's motorcycle to check off another aspiration. The next goal on her list? Skydiving.



Centenarian ink

■ Shortly after doing a news segment for Tampa's WFLA Channel 8 in June, Victoria Price received an email from an out-of-state viewer who noticed a lump on her neck. "Please have your thyroid checked," wrote the viewer. "Reminds me of my neck. Mine turned out to be cancer." Price was tempted to dismiss the email, but her boyfriend urged her to see a doctor. As it turns out, Price had papillary thyroid cancer. Last month, Price underwent surgery to have her thyroid and 19 cancerous lymph nodes removed before it was too late. "I just want to thank her from the bottom of my heart," Price said.

Senate panel confirms Russian ties to Trump campaign

What happened

The Republican-led Senate Intelligence Committee concluded this week that Russia conducted “an aggressive, multifaceted effort” to sway the 2016 election for Donald Trump that Trump’s campaign knew about and welcomed. The committee said that Trump’s former campaign chairman Paul Manafort shared internal polling data with Russian intelligence officer Konstantin Kilimnik and strategized “in detail” with him about defeating Hillary Clinton. While the fifth—and final—report from the committee does not accuse the Trump campaign of a coordinated conspiracy with Russia, its nearly 1,000 pages portray a sprawling web of contacts between the campaign’s most senior officials and Russian intelligence operations. It also emerged this week that the committee made criminal referrals of White House strategist Steve Bannon, Donald Trump Jr., and the president’s son-in-law Jared Kushner for potentially false or misleading testimony.

The Trump campaign used former adviser Roger Stone to lobby WikiLeaks for advance notice on dumps of emails hacked from the Democratic National Committee by Russian spies, the report said, and encouraged “further theft of information.” The committee found that Trump told aides to “stay in touch” with Stone about future leaks, casting doubt on Trump’s insistence that he couldn’t recall discussing WikiLeaks. It also uncovered evidence independent of the controversial “Steele dossier” of Trump’s involvement with Russian women during visits to Moscow, including testimony that Ritz-Carlton Moscow employees discussed an elevator video of Trump with several women. Trump called the report “a hoax.”



Senate: Manafort sought Russian help.

What the columnists said

The Senate report reveals “damning” evidence, said **Jonathan Chait** in *NYMag.com*. Manafort, it states, “on numerous occasions” shared internal information with Kilimnik, and then hid those communications using encrypted apps, burner phones, and other techniques. Precisely why Manafort did this remains unknown, but the report does link him *and* Kilimnik to Russia’s hacking of the DNC. Though some details are redacted, the report states that Manafort’s relationship with Kilimnik was a “grave counterintelligence threat”—and that he sought Russia’s assistance with Trump’s knowledge.

The report should settle, once and for all, that the FBI’s investigation into the Russian meddling “was *not* a hoax,” said **Quin Hillyer** in *WashingtonExaminer.com*. In fact, there is “so much irrefutable evidence” of Russian meddling in the report, as well as contacts between the Trump campaign and Russian spies, and people connected to them, that the FBI “would have been derelict” had it not opened an investigation. “Trump fans need to get this through their heads.”

The outing of Kilimnik as a spy is devastating for Trump, said **Philip Bump** in *The Washington Post*. Now, for the first time, we have a direct line from “Russian intelligence to Kilimnik to Manafort.” At one meeting, the longtime political operative, who made millions working for pro-Kremlin politicians in Ukraine, walked the spy through strategy for battleground states, identifying areas where Trump hoped to swing voters. As Democrats said in their addendum to the report, “This is what collusion looks like.”

Postal chief retreats on service changes

What happened

Amid fierce public backlash, U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy announced this week that he was postponing cost-cutting measures that have slowed mail delivery and sparked fears about compromised mail-in balloting this fall. “To avoid even the appearance of any impact on election mail,” he said, “I am suspending these initiatives until after the election.” Since assuming the job in June, DeJoy, a major donor to President Trump, has cut back overtime, reduced post office hours, and decommissioned scores of high-speed mail-sorting machines. The moves led to reports of weeks-long waits for paychecks and mail-order medications and stoked fears that service was intentionally being slowed to aid the president’s re-election effort. Some 47 percent of voters who back Joe Biden intend to vote by mail during the pandemic, compared with 11 percent of Trump supporters, according to a *Wall Street Journal*/NBC News poll. Those fears were compounded last week when Trump declared he would veto any coronavirus relief bill that included emergency funding for the USPS. Without the funding, he said, “You can’t have universal mail-in voting.”

DeJoy’s reversal came days before he was set to testify to Congress, and hours after more than 20 states announced plans to file lawsuits over the policy changes, arguing that they will unlawfully impede state elections. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called on members to return from recess this week to vote on a bill that would boost USPS funding by \$25 billion and undo the recent service changes. DeJoy’s announcement, said Pelosi, is “wholly insufficient and does not reverse damage already wreaked.”

What the columnists said

There are enough holes in DeJoy’s statement to “drive a full-size family minivan through,” said **Charles Pierce** in *Esquire.com*. Will the 671 sorting machines removed from USPS facilities be returned? Will overtime be approved for workers facing a November crush? Will DeJoy push ahead with plans to charge states first-class rates for ballots, more than double what they traditionally pay? Democrats must press hard for answers, while keeping in mind the crucial political fact of our era: that “nothing this administration says can be taken as the truth.”

Cut the “hysteria,” said **Rich Lowry** in *NationalReview.com*. DeJoy’s not trying to undermine democracy, he’s trying to save an agency that lost more than \$2 billion last quarter and is headed for bankruptcy without meaningful change. That’s why he’s cutting overtime; meanwhile, plans to deactivate sorting machines were in the works long before his arrival. These needed reforms should be praised by those “caterwauling about how essential the post office is to the American way of life.”

DeJoy’s retreat is welcome, but much of the damage “may be impossible to undo,” said **Michael McGough** in the *Los Angeles Times*. For some Americans, Trump’s unfounded trashing of mail-in voting has planted doubts about whether their mail ballots will be counted, or whether they might be canceled out by “fraudulently cast votes.” These voters “may be suspicious about the outcome.” That distrust may not fade “however heroically the post office conducts itself from now until the final votes are counted.”

Kamala Harris: Will she give Biden's campaign a boost?

"The process was long and winding," said E.J. Dionne in *The Washington Post*, but Joe Biden finally got it right last week in picking Sen. Kamala Harris to be his 2020 running mate. It's not just that Harris, 55, a five-term congresswoman and former attorney general of California, is eminently qualified to serve as president if the 77-year-old Biden doesn't complete a full term or steps down after one. Harris' gender and ethnicity—as the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, she's the first woman of color on a major-party ticket—will invigorate Biden-skeptical progressives, while her own pragmatic, moderate credentials should soothe the "ideological anxiety" of mainstream voters worried Biden might be a Trojan horse for the radical Left. Harris is also a battle-tested national campaigner, said Bart Jansen in *USA Today*. Biden learned firsthand how this former prosecutor can land a punch on the debate stage when she went after him on his opposition in the 1970s to school busing. Harris' Senate grillings of Jeff Sessions, Brett Kavanaugh, and William Barr, meanwhile, are "the stuff of Democratic legend." If she "brings that same fire" to the Democratic ticket, in particular to her debate with the ever-evasive Mike Pence, Biden's safe-but-inspired choice of running mate could well be decisive in November.

If Harris is a good campaigner, said Matt Purple in *The American Conservative.com*, why did her own campaign go so "horribly wrong?" She entered the race in January 2019 as Biden's most viable challenger, polling a healthy 15 percent in the 24-candidate field. By December, though, she was at 4 percent, thanks to incoherent, shifting positions on Medicare for All and police reform, and generally having proved herself "too liberal for the moderates and not liberal enough for the Left." Harris' "legendary" verbal-combat skills are



Harris: A historic choice

also wildly overrated, said Noah Rothman in *CommentaryMagazine.com*. Just consider her interrogation of Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh. Democrats still swoon over the supposedly "masterful moment" when Harris asked a bewildered Kavanaugh about his secret contacts with "the Kasowitz law firm," which represented Donald Trump. Kavanaugh denied it, and Harris dropped the matter. As we also saw in the debates, Harris throws lots of punches, but it's all for effect. She "has no follow-through."

Nor is she any kind of moderate, said Kyle Smith in *National Review.com*. Harris has long advocated single-payer health care and says illegal immigrants should be covered by it for free. She's also fully on board with the socialistic Green New Deal and would happily "destroy the filibuster" and expand and pack the Supreme Court to get it passed. At the same time, Harris doesn't excite many people on the Left, said Tiana Lowe in *WashingtonExaminer*. They're well aware that as California's attorney general, Harris aggressively prosecuted nonviolent drug crime and used prisoners to fight wildfires for \$1 a day.

Actually, Biden's choice of Harris was a smart tactical move, said Manisha Sinha in *The New York Times*, and to an Indian-American woman like me, it feels like a "personal gift." After eight years of the Obama presidency, the open racism and anti-immigrant animus Trump brought to the White House has been deeply alarming to all people of color. The charismatic Harris "represents the very groups mocked and vilified by Trump—women, Black people and immigrants"—and will energize those voters. At the same time, a Biden-Harris ticket represents "the cosmopolitan, interracial democracy that a majority of Americans aspire to live in today."

Only in America

■ A Colorado police chief decided not to fire an officer who repeatedly commented "Kill Them All!" on social media reports on Black Lives Matter protests. Chief Vince Niski said that while he found Sgt. Keith Wrede's comments "unprofessional, distasteful, and not reflective of our department," they "were made off-duty out of frustration, and there was no indication of any physical action or intent to cause harm."

■ An Iowa State professor was forced to change her syllabus after warning students their work could not criticize Black Lives Matter, gay marriage, or legal abortion. Professor Chloe Clark said she would eject any student who engaged in "othering" nonprivileged groups, but school officials said such a rule would violate students' "First Amendment rights."

Good week for:

Nature, after a bald eagle attacked a high-tech government drone in flight and sent it plunging into Lake Michigan. Julia Ponder of the University of Minnesota's Raptor Center said the eagle "is the king of the skies" and probably felt its territory was being invaded.

Cattle, with new research by conservationists in Botswana that lions are less likely to attack a cow if it has a pair of large eyes painted on its buttocks, which fools predators into thinking they've been spotted. The eye trick, researchers said, is a useful addition to the "carnivore-livestock conflict prevention toolbox."

Benevolent narcissism, after actor Dennis Quaid adopted a kitten named Dennis Quaid from a Virginia animal shelter after seeing a TV news report on the orphaned feline. "I'm out to save all the Dennis Quaid's of the world," Quaid declared.

Bad week for:

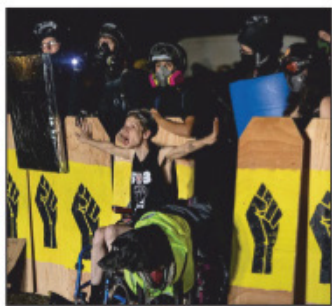
Love letters, after the Senate Intelligence Committee released several fawning letters that Donald Trump wrote to Russian dictator Vladimir Putin before Trump became president. "As you probably heard, I am a big fan of yours!" Trump wrote in 2007, adding that Putin "definitely deserves" being named *Time's* "Man of the Year."

Self-incrimination, with the drunk-driving arrest of a British man whose Range Rover had lost a wheel and bore a bumper sticker reading "I'm not drunk, just avoiding potholes."

Transparency, with the launch, in Tokyo, of public toilets with see-through walls. The walls become opaque when the door is locked, but regain their translucence upon the user's exit, thus fostering "a spirit of hospitality for the next person."

A court victory for transgender rights

A federal judge this week temporarily blocked a Trump administration rule that would have rolled back Affordable Care Act protections for transgender people against discrimination from hospitals, doctors, and health insurance providers. Judge Frederic Block found that the administration's new rule appears to contradict a Supreme Court decision made in June, three days after the rule was finalized, that the Civil Rights Act of 1964 protects transgender workers from discrimination in the workplace. The 2010 ACA included much the same language as the 1964 act in also prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, and sex. Administration lawyers had argued that the word "sex" should not extend to transgender people.



Portland barricades

Portland, Ore.

Violent clashes:

Far-right demonstrators clashed with Black Lives Matter protesters last week, trading paint balls and pepper spray in a tense face-

off that ended with a pair of shots fired from a moving car. Some 30 members of a far-right group gathered downtown to wave American flags and battle demonstrators who've assembled daily for months and clashed with police. It was one of a number of confrontations between racial-justice demonstrators and far-right groups. In Kalamazoo, Mich., a demonstration by members of the alt-right Proud Boys erupted into a brawl with counter-demonstrators, leading to numerous arrests. In the Atlanta suburb Stone Mountain, militia members and white nationalists who'd planned a rally at a Confederate monument skirmished with anti-racism protesters. Anti-police protests also led to violence in Chicago, where 17 were injured as protesters attacked police with umbrellas and skateboards, and Minneapolis, where black-clad assailants lobbed rocks and fireworks at a police precinct.



Evacuations ordered

California

Summer inferno:

A historic heat wave smothered the western U.S. this week, forcing rolling blackouts in California and ignit-

ing Northern California fires over 50,000 acres. The heat created rare fire-induced tornadoes and violent lightning storms that in turn set off wildfires that threaten the Bay Area. The blackouts were the first in the state in 19 years. Temperatures across much of the region soared above 100 degrees, reaching 130 degrees in Death Valley—the hottest surface temperature recorded on Earth in the age of modern measurement. (Two pre-1932 readings are disputed.) In Phoenix, temperatures hit 110 degrees for five consecutive days, bringing the total number of such days in 2020 to a record-smashing 40. Scientists credited the weather to a high-powered “heat dome,” formed by elevated pressure high in Earth’s atmosphere exacerbated by climate change.

Washington, D.C.

Bounties for dead soldiers:

Analyses from U.S. intelligence agencies found that Iran paid Taliban fighters for attacking Americans in Afghanistan at least six times in the past year alone. A Trump administration official told CNN that the Iran-Taliban link was part of the argument for assassinating Iranian Gen. Qasem Soleimani in January, although officials made no mention of the intelligence at the time for fear of upsetting peace talks with the Taliban. The Iran-instigated attacks began on Dec. 11 with an assault on Bagram Airfield that killed two and wounded 70, including four Americans. It came just two weeks after President Trump announced renewed talks with the Taliban after a long pause. The State Department confirmed Iran had used “some elements of the Taliban” to upset the peace process. The news of Iranian bounties follows reports of similar bounties paid to the Taliban by Russia.

Chapel Hill, N.C.

Reopening canceled:

A week after school reopened, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill abruptly moved all instruction online after coronavirus clusters infected at least 177 students. Almost 14 percent of students tested had positive results, signaling a widening epidemic. The college mandated masks, and classrooms and dorms were well under capacity when classes began Aug. 10. But the student newspaper cited “parties throughout the weekend” and “reckless” behavior. “We all saw this coming,” *The Daily Tar Heel* wrote in an editorial. The University of Notre Dame followed suit Tuesday, canceling in-person classes for at least two weeks, after 80 new cases were reported Monday and linked to an off-campus party. Meanwhile, images of mass gatherings of maskless students in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Dahlenega, Ga.—some linked to fraternity pledge parties—circulated widely on social media, prompting anger and fears of outbreaks.

New York

Viral success:

City and state officials celebrated the remarkable turnaround to the coronavirus epidemic this week, even as they braced for a likely second surge of infections in the fall with the start of the school year and cold weather driving people indoors. In New York, once the epicenter of the pandemic in America, levels of the virus have dwindled to a point where less than 1 percent of the roughly 30,000 tests performed each day now come back as positive, a far cry from the 20 percent-plus rate logged in some neighborhoods in April. Public health officials credit swift and strict lockdown orders and a high rate of masking and social distancing among the populace for the city’s success. “People in New York have taken matters much more seriously than in other places,” said Dr. Howard Markel, a historian of epidemics at the University of Michigan. “And all they’re doing is reducing the risk.”



Returning to the subways

Washington, D.C.

False statement:

A former FBI lawyer admitted this week to altering a CIA email that was later used by his colleagues to obtain a renewed wiretap on President Trump’s former campaign adviser Carter Page. Kevin Clinesmith, 38, pleaded guilty to a felony count of making a false statement in the first charges to come from prosecutor John Durham’s review of the FBI’s investigation into Russia’s 2016 election interference. Clinesmith removed a reference in a CIA email that identified Page as a sometime intelligence source for the agency. He also told his supervisor that Page was not a CIA source. Previously, the FBI’s inspector general, Michael Horowitz, found that while the FBI investigation was not motivated by anti-Trump bias, there were substantial “errors and omissions” in the FBI’s wiretap applications. Attorney Gen. William Barr said Durham’s investigation will continue, and promised “significant developments before the election.”



Pleaded guilty



Pro-reform

Victoria, British Columbia

ODs surge: The pandemic is causing an additional public-health crisis in Canada: a spike in the number of overdoses. Border closures have reduced the amount of illicit drugs entering the country, so dealers are bulking up their drugs with toxic substances, while users who have to wait a long time for a fix tend to overconsume. Many drug treatment facilities are closed, and those that remain open require patients to isolate before being admitted; some patients OD in isolation. About 800 people have suffered fatal overdoses in British Columbia so far this year—about four times as many people as have died of Covid-19 in the province. Some doctors and police chiefs, as well as family members of those who have overdosed, are calling on the government to decriminalize opioids to curb the OD epidemic.

Bamako, Mali

Military coup: Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta was ousted in a military uprising this week following mass protests over claims that he rigged the March parliamentary elections. Soldiers detained Keïta and Prime Minister Boubou Cissé at their homes, and a few hours later Keïta appeared on state TV to say his government would step down. “I don’t want any blood to be shed to keep me in my position,” he said. Protesters have poured into the streets of Bamako for months, saying Keïta—first elected in 2013—has mismanaged the economy along with the fight against Tuareg rebels and jihadist groups in the north. Col.-Maj. Ismael Wague, spokesman for the mutiny, pledged to hold elections as soon as possible, saying, “We are not keen on power, but we are keen on the stability of the country.”



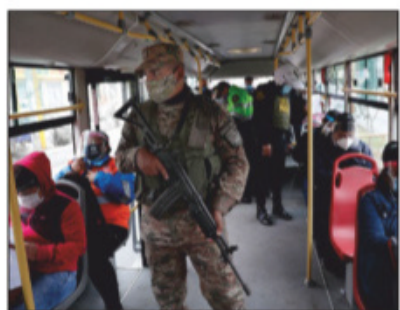
Troops take control.

Recife, Brazil

Outrage over abortion: A far-right Brazilian paramilitary group tried to prevent a 10-year-old rape victim from getting an abortion this week. The girl’s name and the hospital where she was to have the procedure were leaked online by Sara Giromini, a leader of the armed group Os 300 that fanatically supports President Jair Bolsonaro. Anti-abortion activists and politicians blocked the entrance of the hospital in Recife where the girl was supposed to receive the termination, screaming “Murderers!” The activists claimed the girl’s pregnancy had gone beyond the 12-week limit in which abortion is permitted. The girl, who says she was raped repeatedly by her 33-year-old uncle, was safely sneaked onto the hospital grounds in the trunk of a car. Brazilian courts have ordered social media companies to scrub the girl’s name from the internet.

Lima, Peru

No Sunday dinners: Peru has reimposed a Sunday curfew to prevent people from traveling to relatives’ houses for family feasts—social gatherings that officials have blamed for a recent spike in Covid-19 cases. The only people allowed to leave home on Sundays are essential workers such as doctors, and they must display special passes. Thousands of police have been deployed across the country to enforce the curfew. “The police are authorized to enter any home where family social gatherings or reunions are held,” said Lima police chief Jorge Cayas. Peru has the second-highest Covid-19 fatality rate in the world after Belgium. It has registered 550,000 cases and more than 26,000 deaths.



Enforcing the curfew

London

Exam debacle: English Education Secretary Gavin Williamson was fighting for his job this week after the government made a mess of college entrance exams. The exams, known as A-levels, couldn’t be held in person because of the pandemic, so the Department for Education asked teachers to base final grades on students’ practice tests and previous work. But the country’s education regulator decided teachers had been too generous, and it used an algorithm to re-weight the grades based on schools’ past results. Tens of thousands of teenagers were told their predicted grades had been lowered, and those lower scores caused many to be denied admission to college. After a huge outcry from parents and accusations of discrimination against low-income students, the government has now agreed to use the teachers’ scores. “I’m incredibly sorry for the fact that this has caused distress,” Williamson said.

Buenos Aires

Lockdown protest: Honking car horns and waving flags, tens of thousands of Argentines rallied this week against an extension of the coronavirus lockdown in Buenos Aires. The national lockdown, imposed in March, was recently eased in rural areas but remains in place in the capital, where the virus is surging. Argentina has seen some 300,000 Covid-19 cases and is adding about 5,000 new infections a day. Protesters also complained that the government of President Alberto Fernández is exploiting the crisis for political gain, seeking to ram through a judicial reform bill they say is intended to shield Vice President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, a former president under investigation for corruption. The government dismissed the protest, saying it had been instigated by the right-wing opposition.



Protesting Kirchner



Beirut

Hariri killer convicted: A United Nations—backed tribunal this week convicted a low-level member of Hezbollah for his involvement in the massive 2005 truck bombing that killed former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and 21 others in Beirut. But the Netherlands-based court acquitted three other Hezbollah members and said there was “no direct evidence” that leaders of the Lebanese Shiite militia or their allies in the Syrian government were involved in the attack. Months before he was killed, Hariri—a Sunni Muslim—had resigned in anger at Syrian interference in the country, including the presence of Syrian soldiers. Mass protests over the 2005 bombing forced Syria to withdraw its troops. Nadim Houry, director of the Arab Reform Initiative, said the tribunal’s failure to identify those who ordered the attack was a “massive” disappointment.

Hariri: Who ordered hit?

Pyongyang

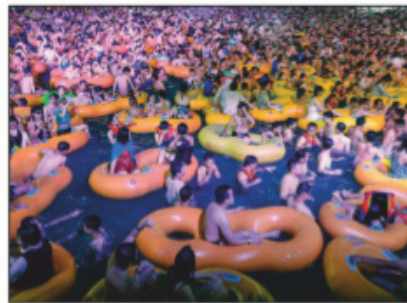
Give up your dogs: As a food shortage grips North Korea, the regime has ordered pet dogs to be confiscated in the country’s capital, denouncing the keeping of pets as a “bourgeois” extravagance. “Ordinary people raise pigs and livestock on their porches,” a source told South Korea’s *Chosun Ilbo*. “But high-ranking officials and the wealthy own pet dogs, which stoked some resentment.” Hungry North Koreans regard feeding a pet as wasteful, an outrageous diversion of food that could go to a needy family. Authorities are now forcing households with pet dogs to surrender the animals or have them put down. Some of the animals are sent to zoos, while many are sold to dog-meat restaurants.



Farewell Fido

Wuhan, China

Pool party: In a sign of China’s success at containing the coronavirus, thousands of revelers gathered last week at an open-air water park in Wuhan for an electronic music festival. Photos of the event, showing unmasked partygoers dancing shoulder to shoulder and floating on inflatable tubes, went viral around the world. Wuhan, where the coronavirus emerged late last year, recorded some 50,000



No social distancing

Covid-19 cases, and the city’s 11 million residents were placed under a strict 76-day lockdown that was lifted in early April. The city has recorded no new cases of community transmission since May. Residents are alerted by cellphone app if they have been near someone who tested positive and are told to quarantine. To enter the water park, concertgoers had to show their ID and a “green” health code generated by the app.

Gaza

Week of attacks: Israeli warplanes carried out nightly bombing raids in Gaza this week, in an effort to stop Hamas—the Islamist group that governs the territory—from firing rockets and sending incendiary balloons and kites into Israel. Makeshift firebombs attached to kites and balloons have sparked dozens of blazes on farms and in communities in southern Israel. The retaliatory Israeli strikes severely damaged Hamas security posts and wounded several people, but no deaths were reported. Israel also shut the main commercial-goods crossing into Gaza, halting fuel deliveries for the territory’s sole power plant. Gazans now get only four hours of electricity a day, supplied by the Israeli grid. Israel warned that it could escalate its response if the firebombings continue. “If they want war,” said President Reuven Rivlin, “they will get war.”

Mogadishu, Somalia

Terrorist attack: Five militants with the al-Shabab jihadist group blasted their way into an upscale hotel in Mogadishu this week, killing at least 12 people. The attackers detonated a car bomb outside the Elite Hotel—a popular meeting spot for Somali government officials and business leaders—and then stormed the building. Somali special forces took back the hotel after a four-hour gun battle. Al-Shabab wants to impose its hard-line version of



Devastation outside the hotel

sharia law in Somalia and has launched scores of attacks both there and in neighboring Kenya over the past decade. Dozens of U.S. drone strikes in recent years “have culled al-Shabab’s leadership ranks,” says analyst Rashid Abdi, “but not significantly dented its capacity.”

Auckland, New Zealand



Covid is back: More than three months after New Zealand was declared free of the coronavirus, about 75 cases have been detected in Auckland, and authorities don’t know

where the new outbreak originated. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern put the city under a two-week lockdown and sent troops to patrol the island’s ports. The country’s election has also been pushed back a month, to Oct. 17. But Ardern disputed President Trump’s charge that her country was experiencing a “big surge” of the virus. “Anyone who is following,” she said, “will quite easily see that New Zealand’s nine cases in a day do not compare to the United States’ tens of thousands.” The death rate from Covid-19 is currently 52 deaths per 100,000 people in the U.S. and just 0.45 deaths per 100,000 people in New Zealand.



Ardern: Delaying election

A Beatle dreams of Lennon



In the aftermath of the Beatles 1969 split, Paul McCartney would routinely shrug off his old band's importance, said Dylan Jones in *GQ* (U.K.). That was partly a result of the Fab Four's acrimonious breakup—McCartney had sued his fellow Beatles to prevent John Lennon's conniving manager, Allen Klein, from seizing control of the group's back catalog. "That was horrendous and it gave me some terrible times," says McCartney. "I drank way too much." Lennon started planting barbs in his solo lyrics, insinuating that "Yesterday" was the only Beatles song written by McCartney. It left McCartney racked with self-doubt, until he forced himself to appreciate his vast contributions: "Eleanor Rigby," "Hey Jude," "Let It Be," and many more. He began to understand that the Beatles had been a family—"and families have disputes." In the early days of the Beatles, they'd "be in the back of a van in the freezing British winter, so you had to lie on top of each other. That makes friends of people." McCartney made up with Lennon years before his ex-bandmate was shot dead in 1980, "so we were friends till the end." Now age 78, McCartney often has dreams in which he's playing with Lennon or George Harrison, who died in 2001. "It's normally very pleasant. I love those boys."

Russia's doping mastermind

Grigory Rodchenkov was the brains behind a vast sporting conspiracy, said Murad Ahmed in the *Financial Times*. As the former head of Moscow's ironically named Anti-Doping Center, he gave cocktails of performance-enhancing drugs to dozens of athletes, part of a Kremlin-approved scheme to secure Russia supremacy at the Olympics. A trained chemist, he created a three-drug mix that could foil blood tests so long as athletes took their PEDs with a booze chaser—men got Chivas whisky, women Martini vermouth. "We have the best researchers in my laboratory," Rodchenkov says. "No other country could reach halfway what we did." The proof of his chemical prowess was on show at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, where Russia topped the standings with 13 gold medals. Then in 2016, Rodchenkov turned whistleblower—possibly because international sporting bodies had gotten wise to his scheme—and fled to the U.S. to live under witness protection, leaving his wife and children behind in Russia. Rodchenkov says Russian agents have tried to find him. "It's the same [as] war. You are afraid during the first week. Then you live in war." Russia has been stripped of its Sochi medals, but Rodchenkov doubts doping will ever be eliminated. "It's a daydream. Sport won't be clean. Never."



Wiig's fertility struggles

The road to motherhood was long and painful for Kristen Wiig, said Laura Brown in *InStyle*. The actress and former *Saturday Night Live* star has been together with her husband, actor Avi Rothman, for five years. Three of those years, Wiig says, "were spent in an IVF haze. Emotionally, spiritually, and medically, it was probably the most difficult time in my life." The IVF process consumed nearly every waking hour. "You're always waiting by the phone and getting test results, and it was just bad news after bad news. It got to the point where I stopped talking about it entirely, because I would get sad whenever someone asked." Wiig started to feel like she was failing her husband, and when her doctor pitched alternative routes to parenthood, "I was just like, 'Nope. Don't ever bring that up again. I'm getting pregnant.'" Eventually, Wiig realized she needed help and together with Roth found an "amazing" surrogate. When their surrogate became pregnant with twins last year, Wiig felt "over the moon feeling them kick for the first time, but then I would ask myself all these questions, like, 'Why couldn't I do this?'" The twins were born in January. "It was a beautiful thing," Wiig says. "Now that I'm on the other side, I wouldn't have had it any other way."

In the news

■ British Princes **William** and **Harry** didn't speak for two months after Harry and his wife, Meghan Markle, resigned from their royal duties, royal biographer Omid Scobie said this week. The brothers used to be very close, but bad feelings arose when Harry and Meghan announced their plans to leave the U.K. in January, reports Scobie, author of *Finding Freedom*, a new book packed with palace intrigue. Heir to the throne William, 38, was report-

edly furious with Harry, 35, for what he saw as a damaging episode for the royal family, and didn't speak to him until their father, Charles, tested positive for Covid-19 in March. The two still rarely speak, and Markle and William's wife, Kate Middleton, have no communication. "The distance between the brothers grew wider and wider," Scobie says. "That's really going to take some time to heal."

■ A burglary at **Ellen DeGeneres'** California mansion was an "inside job," says *The Sun* (U.K.). Jewelry and expensive watches were stolen from the 8,100-square-foot mansion in Montecito, Calif., on July 4. A residents association for the neighborhood—home to dozens of celebrities, including Oprah Winfrey and Prince Harry—said crime is very rare there, and

quoted police as telling them that the theft "appears to be an inside job." It's unknown whether the talk-show host, 62, and wife Portia de Rossi, 47, were home at the time of the break-in.

■ The viral music video "WAP" came with a hefty price tag because of coronavirus concerns, rapper **Cardi B** said last week. "It was kind of weird shooting the video in the age of corona," she said. "We had to spend \$100,000 just on testing" everyone on set for the controversial, raunchy video, which features rapper Megan Thee Stallion and a Kylie Jenner cameo. "We had a tiger and a leopard there," Cardi added, "but we didn't film with them in there because of the pandemic. We spliced those scenes together." The video has already been viewed more than 100 million times.



China's war on religion

To secure its hold on power, the Communist Party is tightening its control over all faiths in China.

When did the crackdown begin?

Religious repression has intensified across China since President Xi Jinping took office in 2013. The brutal crackdown on minority Muslims in the northwestern region of Xinjiang—where mosques and madrasas are being demolished and more than 1 million Uighurs have been detained in re-education camps—has sparked international outrage. But the Communist Party's assault on faith is not limited to Islam. Authorities have used the world's distraction over the coronavirus pandemic to accelerate an ongoing campaign against Christianity. Officially atheist, the party sees adherence to any faith, particularly those with foreign origins such as Christianity and Islam, as a threat to its dominance. So Xi has embarked on the "sinicization" of religious practice, ordering Muslim, Buddhist, and Christian leaders to integrate Chinese communist thought into their belief systems. The party wants people "to love the motherland and their faith," says You Quan, head of the body that oversees ethnic and religious affairs in China. Sinicization has resulted in thousands of churches and mosques being shuttered and razed; those that remain fly Chinese flags.

How is Christianity practiced in China?

For decades, Chinese Catholics and Protestants have been divided between those who attend state-sanctioned churches—in which clerics are appointed by Beijing—and those who attend so-called underground churches. About half of China's 12 million Catholics worship in the underground churches loyal to the Vatican. To try to heal that schism, Beijing and the Vatican struck a deal in 2018 that gave Chinese authorities the right to recommend new bishops and the pope the power to approve or veto them. Beijing has exploited that agreement by refusing to name bishops to half of China's 98 dioceses, while pressuring priests to adhere to party regulations, saying that the Vatican pact means that the pope commands them to do so. Portraits of the Virgin Mary have been replaced by portraits of Xi, and priests have been compelled to incorporate Xi's sayings into their sermons.

What about Protestant churches?

Protestantism is China's fastest-growing religion, and so is especially worrisome to Xi. The state-registered church, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, claims some 39 million adherents. But at least another 40 million are thought to worship in underground "home churches"—pushing the share of Chinese who are Protestants to nearly 6 percent, about the same as the membership of the Communist Party. Beijing is determined to control the faith. Online bookstores have been banned from selling Bibles as authorities prepare a new Mandarin translation that some fear



A demolished 'home church' in central Henan province

will omit whole chapters. Pastors have been ordered to attend government-sponsored training sessions, where they are told that in China the "state leads and church follows." Thousands of underground churches have been closed. At those that remain open, symbols of faith have been purged, with crosses and Bibles burned. Facial recognition cameras have been installed so that authorities can track and harass worshippers, a tactic pioneered against Buddhists in the autonomous Chinese province of Tibet.

What happened in Tibet?

Tibetan Buddhism has been targeted by Beijing for decades because it is a central pillar of Tibetan identity. That repression has ramped up under Xi. Tens of thousands of party members have been deployed to temples and villages under an outreach initiative that doubles as a surveillance program. And since 2016, up to 17,000 Buddhist monks and nuns have been evicted from two key training institutes and sent to indoctrination centers where, the U.S. State Department reports, they were beaten and shocked with electric batons. Chen Quanguo, the Politburo member who oversaw the Tibet crackdown, was sent to Xinjiang in 2016 to use the same playbook against Uighur Muslims. Detainees are forced to say "there is no God, there is only the Communist Party," said Omer Kanat, head of the U.S.-based Uighur Human Rights Project.

Are other religious groups being repressed?

The Hui, a Muslim minority of some 10 million people in central China, are now suffering the same fate as the Uighurs. Their mosques are being sinicized, stripped of domes and minarets, and the call to prayer has been banned. Many Hui fear that concentration camps may come next. The only faith that remains relatively free is Chinese Buddhism, which is seen as indigenous. Still, it, too, is being pressed into party service: In 2018, the Shaolin Monastery—birthplace of kung fu—was forced to fly the Chinese national flag for the first time in its 1,500-year history.

How has the U.S. responded?

The Trump administration has sanctioned dozens of companies and governmental bodies connected to human rights abuses in Xinjiang. And last month, Chen and three other top officials were hit with sanctions under the Global Magnitsky Act, freezing their U.S. assets and banning American companies from doing business with them. The U.S. will not stand by, said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, as the Communist Party attempts to eradicate Uighurs' "culture and Muslim faith." But outside pressure is unlikely to alter Chinese policy, says Karrie Koesel, an expert on religion in China. "The state," she says, "sees religion as an existential threat."

Eradicating Falun Gong

The Chinese government has identified "five poisons" that threaten its rule: pro-democracy activists, Taiwanese nationalists, Tibetan dissidents, Uighur separatists, and Falun Gong—a spiritual discipline that mixes traditional qigong with New Age philosophy. Founded in north-east China in 1992 by former trumpet player Li Hongzhi, Falun Gong ("law wheel practice") promises salvation to those who study Master Li's texts and practice a regimen of gentle physical movements. Li attracted some 70 million followers in a matter of years, a level of popularity that worried the Communist Party. It banned Falun Gong in 1999, labeling the movement an "evil cult" and arresting tens of thousands of adherents. Human rights activists say thousands were killed and had their organs harvested for transplant. Falun Gong practitioners who fled to Hong Kong, where they could practice freely, fear a sweeping new security law imposed on the city by Beijing could now be wielded against them. "It is a hanging knife over our heads," said Ingrid Wu, a Falun Gong spokeswoman.

Lockdowns aren't killing the economy

Scott Gottlieb
and Michael Strain
The Wall Street Journal

"America is largely open for business, but consumers are still staying home," said Scott Gottlieb and Michael Strain. Thirty-six states have lifted or relaxed bans on large gatherings, 33 have opened bars, and "every state has restarted at least some nonessential businesses." But economic activity remains depressed, and consumers' fear of the virus appears to be the primary factor. Many economists believe the loss of millions of jobs in March was driven by public worries about getting sick, "not by lockdown orders." Labor demand dropped equally across states, regardless of when lockdown orders were imposed. Many job losses were in retail, airlines, and personal-care businesses that anxious consumers avoided—avoidance that has continued as government restrictions have largely ended. That means "the fate of the economy this fall and winter depends on controlling spread." Because a return to "stay at home" orders is unlikely, we must rely on "prudence in personal interactions, more widespread mask wearing, and extensive testing and isolation to keep the virus under control." If we fail at these measures, we face "a lot of tragic death and disease," and the very real possibility that "the economy could tip back into recession."

The ugly return of birtherism

Ian Millhiser
and Aaron Rupar
Vox.com

"If you thought Trumpworld had moved past birtherism, think again," said Ian Millhiser and Aaron Rupar. After Joe Biden announced Sen. Kamala Harris as his presidential running mate, the Trump campaign began lending credence to the same "racist conspiracy theories" that Donald Trump used to question Barack Obama's eligibility to be president. Trump campaign legal adviser Jenna Ellis retweeted a "fringe theory" claiming that Harris is "not entitled to birthright citizenship under the 14th Amendment" and thus is ineligible to serve as vice president. Harris was born in Oakland to immigrant parents from India and Jamaica who may not yet have been U.S. citizens. Back in 1898, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the 14th Amendment makes a citizen of anyone born on U.S. soil who isn't a child of a foreign diplomat or otherwise not subject to U.S. law. Yet Ellis said Harris' eligibility is an "open question," and Trump himself said, "I just heard it today that she doesn't meet the requirements." Trump's attack on the citizenship of a black and Indian-American woman born in the U.S., while disgusting, is not surprising. "Once a birther, always a birther."

Deliberately accelerating climate change

Paul Waldman
The Washington Post

Trump administration officials know they may only have a few months left in office, said Paul Waldman, so they're doubling the pace of their efforts "to despoil the environment and accelerate climate change." This week, Interior Secretary David Bernhardt announced he will open the pristine wilderness of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil and gas drilling—a goal long sought by the oil industry. The week before, the administration removed regulations on oil and gas companies' leaks of methane—a very potent greenhouse gas—at drilling sites. These pro-carbon emissions policies come at a time when Earth's climate is getting undeniably hotter, with soaring temperatures setting new records from Phoenix to Washington, D.C. So why promote *more* emissions now? The lobbyists, "grifters, and far-right ideologues" who fill this administration's top jobs are acutely aware they may be returning to oil companies and private industry come January, and are trying to do everything possible "to advance their interests." If Trump loses, the 10 weeks between the election and the inauguration will probably bring a "long list of horrors" on the environment, as well as on immigration and health care. Reversing the damage done in this "dark period" may take a long time.

Viewpoint

"America's quadrennial presidential debates have become an absurdity. They long ago devolved into shallow 'gotcha' contests, prime-time entertainments designed to elicit memorable sound bites—tart put-downs rehearsed in advance or the unforced error of an unexpected gaffe. But under no circumstances are they permitted to bore viewers with a thoughtful exploration of the candidates' views. The candidates don't seek to persuade voters with arguments and evidence. The moderators aren't interested in facilitating real discourse. And the vast majority of viewers who tune in do so not to learn more about each candidate's policies, but to root for one and sneer at the other."

Jeff Jacoby in *The Boston Globe*

It must be true... I read it in the tabloids

■ Residents of Paterson, N.J., were puzzled when an emu ran through their densely populated streets—with one alarmed citizen telling police she'd seen a creature "from outer space." Animal-control authorities were also stumped by the 5-foot-tall bird, native to Australia. "In 48 years I have never seen an emu," said officer John DeCando. "But I can tell you [this one] needs a bath."



■ A Maryland family calmly had lunch with a bear after it nonchalantly wandered over to their picnic table, sat down, and began helping itself to their food. Kaitlyn Nesbit, 29, admitted she was "scared to death" even while a male relative suggested they bring the female bear some peanut butter and even playfully tapped her on the nose. "It's not my fault if she scratches you," Nesbit said to the man in a video shot by other family members. The bear ate and left.

■ A rare earthquake in North Carolina brought Scripture to life for frightened churchgoers. A lector at the outdoor Sunday mass at St. Gabriel's Catholic Church had just reached a Bible passage in which the prophet Elijah intoned, "After the wind there was an earthquake—but the LORD was not in the earthquake," when the magnitude 5.1 quake shook the building. Father Cory Catron, pastor of a nearby Catholic mission, said the quake "made for good homily material."

Marketplace



HARTLEY BOTANIC
HANDMADE WITH PRIDE SINCE 1938
**NOTHING ELSE
IS A HARTLEY**

Bespoke Abutting Victorian Glasshouse, Maine, USA

Discover the secret of Hartley Botanic by calling 781 933 1993 or visit www.hartley-botanic.com

RHS
Inspiring everyone to grow

HANDMADE IN ENGLAND, CHERISHED IN AMERICA
The only aluminium Glasshouses and Greenhouses endorsed by the RHS

© The Royal Horticultural Society 2020. Endorsed by the Royal Horticultural Society. Registered Charity No 222879/SC038262. rhs.org.uk



Get this with your money
at a typical auto parts store.



With money left
to buy lunch!

Or ALL this at
www.RockAuto.com!



- ✓ Reliably Low Prices
- ✓ Easy To Use Website
- ✓ Huge Selection
- ✓ Fast Shipping

UNITED KINGDOM

How to stop the armada of migrants

Patrick O'Flynn
The Spectator

Britain's Conservative government is "colluding in the wholesale exploitation of the asylum system" by people smugglers, said Patrick O'Flynn. When a few boats full of African, Asian, and Middle Eastern migrants crossed the English Channel from France to England last year, Prime Minister Boris Johnson promised that such illegal landings would be punished. Yet hundreds of migrants now try to cross the channel in dinghies every week, and rather than being sent back to camps in the French port of Calais, adult asylum seekers are "escorted to shore and then whisked off to hotels," while minors are placed in the care of social services. When

pressed for something Britain could do besides yelling at France, the government proposed that our Navy push the boats back to French waters, "an obvious violation of the legal duty of seafarers to rescue those in distress." No, Johnson must do as he promised and treat illegal arrivals as lawbreakers to be detained and denied the right to live here. We would have to exit the European Court of Human Rights and repeal our Human Rights Act. But now that we're out of the European Union, we can do that. If Johnson refuses, voters will rally behind populist politicians who will actually defend our borders. "This is shaping up to be Brexit Mark II."

BELGIUM

Don't blame Arabs for beach riot

Cédric Leterme
La Libre

A melee at a crowded Belgian beach last week has brought out the xenophobe in many Belgians, said Cédric Leterme. Complaints about loud music and lack of social distancing sparked a fight on the sands of Blankenberge, and soon dozens of beachgoers were battling—some throwing bottles and chairs at police summoned to the scene. Three young men of immigrant descent were arrested, and local authorities threatened to bar out-of-towners altogether. Inevitably, "much of the media and some political parties bluntly condemned 'Brussels youth,' by which they mean Arabs," implying that minorities are inherently violent and disruptive. But what really caused the riot? First,

the coronavirus crisis forced us all into lockdown for months. Then, as soon as the restrictions were lifted, a brutal heat wave "transformed entire neighborhoods of our overcrowded, concrete-paved cities into an unbearable furnace." Understandably, city folk decamped en masse to the North Sea coast, just a 90-minute train ride from Brussels. The "most marginalized" of us, who live cramped in immigrant slums, needed fresh air most of all. Yet rather than anticipating that influx, authorities simply let the throng compete for spots on the sand, "every man for himself." The youth should not be blamed for tussling over a scarce resource. It is Belgium's unequal, unjust society that is at fault.

Belarus: Will the EU or Russia intervene?

Belarus is at a tipping point, said Bohdan Nahaylo in the *Kyiv Post* (Ukraine).

After President Alexander Lukashenko rigged the Aug. 9 election and forced the vote's likely winner—opposition candidate Svetlana Tikhanovskaya—to flee to Lithuania, the people rose up en masse. Hundreds of thousands have marched through the capital, Minsk, waving the white-and-red flag of the short-lived Belarusian republic of 1918. The protesters have remained peaceful even in the face of "incredibly cruel repression." Thousands have been arrested and tortured; one detained Russian journalist reported that demonstrators were beaten by police and left lying in pools of blood in packed cells. Even workers in state factories, the bedrock of Lukashenko's support during his 26 years in power, are turning on the autocrat. During a speech at a Minsk truck plant this week, he suffered "public humiliation" when the once loyal crowd shouted at him to "Go!" Lukashenko raged at the workers and vowed there would be no new election "until you kill me." At this point, "the only Belarusians the dictator can claim to represent are his ruthless thugs in the uniforms of riot police."

Members of those security forces are already defecting, said Bohdan Ben in *EuromaidanPress.com* (Ukraine). After reports of torture spread through messaging apps, white-clad women surged into the streets, linking arms and confronting the riot police. Since "beating women would be shameful and undermine Lukashenko's regime further," some officers quit on the spot. There are more signs that the "dictator's end is almost certainly



Rallying against Lukashenko in Minsk

nigh." The Belarusian ambassador to Slovakia resigned this week after declaring his support for the protests, and the state media, normally a propaganda outlet, has gone on strike.

If large numbers of factory workers strike, the regime could fall, said Denis Trubetskoy in *NTV.de* (Germany). Lukashenko has been claiming that the protesters are "paid masses" instigated by West Europeans, but he can hardly apply that label to the workers. The question now is what will Russia do? Russia and Belarus are in a military

confederation, and Lukashenko has begged President Vladimir Putin for assistance. Putin surely does not want a pro-democracy revolution to succeed right on his doorstep, but any Russian intervention could turn the majority of Belarusians against Moscow. There are reports that Russian National Guard units, unmarked, have already crossed into Belarus; we don't yet know whether they are intended to help the police or to extract Lukashenko. The wisest course for Putin would be "to act as a mediator in the potential negotiations between Lukashenko and the opposition."

The European Union "has no way of helping the democratic opposition directly," said Paul Lendvai in *Der Standard* (Austria). Active European intervention could offend Putin and provide a pretext for invasion. But the EU can slap "painful sanctions" on Lukashenko and demand new elections with international observers. It must do so now. "A weakened ruler capable of anything" could unleash "disastrous consequences, even a bloodbath."

Israel: Making new friends in the Arab world

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu just secured his legacy, said **Boaz Bismuth** in *Israel Hayom* (Israel). Under a U.S.-brokered deal that was announced last week, the United Arab Emirates has agreed to normalize diplomatic relations with Israel in exchange for Israel suspending its planned annexation of the West Bank. It's a huge achievement for Netanyahu. Only two Arab states had previously recognized Israel—Egypt and Jordan—and most Arab countries in 2002 had vowed not to normalize relations with Israel until the Palestinians had secured statehood. Abu Dhabi's



Netanyahu: Architect of a historic deal with the UAE

crown prince and de facto ruler, Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al-Nahyan (known as MBZ), deserves praise for abandoning that pointless pact. Our two nations' militaries can now work together, which means Israel will have "a frontline base of operations in the Persian Gulf to counter Iran." We'll also benefit from having "robust trade ties" with the country that has "the seventh-largest oil reserve in the world." Jewish settlers are upset that Netanyahu won't deliver the annexation he promised in the last election campaign, but they can take solace in the fact that sovereignty has "been postponed, not abandoned."

While many congratulate U.S. President Donald Trump for the breakthrough, the real credit should go to his predecessor, said **Yaakov Katz** in *The Jerusalem Post* (Israel). It was President Barack Obama's "failed policy in the Middle East," particularly the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, "that helped push Israel and the

moderate Gulf states together." Sunni Muslim Arabs in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain were aghast when Obama signed the pact that strengthened Tehran's growing power. Desperate for an ally against Shiite Iran, they turned to Israel. Expect more Arab rulers to follow MBZ.

The UAE has sold out the Palestinians for weapons, said **Hakki Ocal** in the *Daily Sabah* (Turkey). With Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, MBZ hopes to build a "joint Muslim army to control the Middle

East." These two tyrants are already trying to bomb Yemen into submission but can't get all the warplanes and bombs "they need from the U.S. because of congressional impediments." Now no U.S. lawmaker will dare risk withholding arms from MBZ, the Arab leader who made peace with Israel.

Things look bleak for the increasingly isolated Palestinians, said **Gideon Levy** in *Ha'aretz* (Israel). But they should "see a faint, weak glimmer of light" in this deal. Many Israelis "know only two types of Arabs: terrorists and construction workers." But the UAE, home of Dubai, is "an Arab country that has sent a satellite into space and whose skyscrapers are the most sophisticated in the world." When Emirati pilgrims start coming to Jerusalem to worship, Israelis "will have to show respect to Arabs and treat them like human beings." Maybe this will change how we treat Palestinians. It's not much, "but it's better than nothing."

INDIA

Harris embodies our American dream

Editorial
Hindustan Times

Kamala Harris became the pride of India overnight, said the *Hindustan Times*. The presumptive Democratic vice presidential nominee was raised in California by her Desi mother, and though Harris' father is Jamaican and she is seen as a black American, India can rejoice in her achievement. Her nomination represents "the political pinnacle of the Indian-American community's meteoric rise in the United States." Though they number only 4.5 million, Indian-Americans are the "most highly educated and most wealthy ethnic group" in the U.S. In a single generation, they have produced two state governors—Nikki Haley of South Carolina

and Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, both Republicans—as well as five members of Congress. Of course, we should have no illusions that having one of our daughters in high office will reap foreign policy dividends for India. While Harris, who visited here often as a child, is more familiar with India than most Americans, she is "not necessarily more sympathetic" to its government. To the left of Joe Biden politically, she likely has "a skeptical view of India's rightward political turn" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. But who cares? If elected, Harris will be a heartbeat away from the world's most powerful office, an "Indian living the American dream."

ARGENTINA

How Trump boosts the Left in Latin America

Alfredo Serrano Mancilla and
Silvina Romano

Página 12

U.S. President Donald Trump has achieved the impossible: uniting Latin Americans, said Alfredo Serrano Mancilla and Silvina Romano. Large majorities of voters surveyed across the region can't stand him. And it's quite personal. They take offense at Trump's "interventionist stance, his supremacist character, his warmongering language, his anti-immigration policies"—not to mention his obvious animosity toward Latin Americans in general and Mexicans in particular. This disdain for Trump holds true not merely in countries currently led by the Left, such as Mexico and Argentina, but also in those with governments that tilt Right, such as Chile, Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia, and Brazil.

This causes a dilemma for conservative governments that need "to reconcile their high degree of dependence on the current U.S. president" with the antipathy toward him felt by the majority of voters. As the people reject Trump, they also repudiate Trumpism, with its "matrix of reactionary values" and its disastrous approach to governance. His administration's utter inability to contain the coronavirus is a warning to the region, a failure that is turning Latin Americans away from conservatism and "toward progressivism." Conservative leaders must now ask themselves: Do they really want to be seen as Trump clones? Or should they move leftward, "as their citizens wish"?

Noted

■ President Trump said he intends to give his speech accepting the Republican nomination next week from the White House lawn, overriding concern about ethical and possible legal issues about giving a campaign address on White House grounds. “It’s a place that makes me feel good, it makes the country feel good,” Trump said.

New York Post

■ As many of the nation’s schools go virtual, nearly 17 million children live in homes without high-speed internet service, and more than 7 million lack computers, according to a report by a consortium of civil rights and education groups. The issue disproportionately affects black, Latino, and Native American students, and those in the South and in rural communities.

The Washington Post



■ A giant panda at Washington’s National Zoo is pregnant and will soon give birth, zookeepers announced this week. Panda matriarch Mei Xiang, who was impregnated by artificial insemination, is 22 years old, and would be the oldest panda to give birth in the U.S.

Associated Press

■ One out of four Americans between 18 and 24 said they’d considered suicide during the pandemic, according to a survey by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Among respondents of all ages, 40 percent reported suffering from mental or behavioral health issues related to the pandemic, including anxiety, depression, and stress disorders.

Politico.com

Israel-UAE deal: A big win for Trump

The Trump administration just brokered a “historic peace deal” in the Middle East, said Alex Ward in *Vox.com*. In return for Israel suspending its planned annexation of vast swaths of the West Bank, the United Arab Emirates will become only the third Arab nation

to recognize the Jewish state—and the first since Jordan in 1994. Trump called it a “huge breakthrough” after his son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner spearheaded six weeks of negotiations. Both countries have now promised to work on establishing embassies and direct flights. Most importantly, halting the West Bank annexation revives the possibility of a “two-state solution” between Israel and the Palestinians, which had been all but dead. It’s a big win for Trump, said Daniel DePetris in *WashingtonExaminer.com*. The president becomes the first since Bill Clinton to sign a Middle East peace deal and gets a “big, bold achievement” to tout during the campaign. Still, there are “lingering questions”: How long will Netanyahu’s suspension last? After the deal, he insisted the annexation “remains on the table.”

Let’s not overhype this “statement of intent,” which is not truly a deal, said David Halbf-



Celebrating the deal at the White House

ger in *The New York Times*. Netanyahu’s annexation plans had long ago stalled in the face of fierce European and Arab opposition; the UAE’s offer gave him an excuse to abandon an untenable position. Moreover, Israel and the UAE have enjoyed an unofficial,

“robust diplomatic relationship” for years that is “one of the Middle East’s worst-kept secrets.” This tentative agreement allows the leaders of all three countries to “change the subject” from their own domestic problems and play peacemaker.

Iran, ironically, helped push Israel and the UAE together, said Peter Baker, also in the *Times*. In recent years, the aggressive acts and clear intent of Shiite rulers in Tehran to dominate the region have led Sunni Arab Gulf states like the UAE to see Iran as “a greater enemy than Israel.” Kushner’s personal friendships with foreign leaders have finally paid off, said Graeme Wood in *The Atlantic.com*. His family is tight with Netanyahu, and Kushner has maintained cozy What’s App relationships with the crown princes of Saudi Arabia and the UAE. It’s very unconventional diplomacy, but this may be “what peace looks like, at the beginning anyway.”

QAnon: Now in the GOP mainstream

With “racist conspiracy monger” Marjorie Taylor Greene headed to Congress, “Republicans are becoming the QAnon party,” said Max Boot in *WashingtonPost.com*. Greene won a House primary race last week in a deep-red Georgia district—making her a general election shoo-in—despite being an avowed follower of QAnon, an online “cult” that believes President Trump leads a secret effort to expose and imprison a network of “deep state” child sex traffickers. She’s spoken of a “global cabal of Satan-worshipping pedophiles” and calls Q, a supposed U.S. intelligence official who posts anonymous clues on far-right message boards, a “patriot.” More than 50 congressional candidates promoted QAnon this year, including Jo Rae Perkins, Oregon’s GOP Senate nominee. After Greene’s victory, Trump called her “a future Republican star” and “a real WINNER!”

Most political parties have “an outlandish fringe that marinates in paranoia,” said Rich Lowry in *Politico.com*. The spread of QAnon, however, “shows that the Trump-era GOP has weakened antibodies against kookery.” Q appeals to Trump supporters in particular because it promotes “a radical distrust of traditional sources of information.” Trump and his sons retweet QAnon

accounts, and his former national security adviser Michael Flynn is a pledged member. Greene’s nuttiness goes beyond Q, said Jeremy Beaman in *WashingtonExaminer.com*. She’s an Islamophobe who insists Barack Obama is a Muslim, traffics in anti-Semitic tropes, and claims no plane crashed into the Pentagon on 9/11. “Ultimately, Trump avoids disavowing QAnon fanatics” for the same reason liberals tolerate the anarchists attacking Portland and other cities: “They want the votes.”

QAnon’s growth is alarming, said Justin Ling in *ForeignPolicy.com*. It uses Christian-themed messaging to plant dangerous, sometimes violent delusions with its followers. Many people are complaining that the conspiracy “is destroying their personal relationships,” with husbands, wives, and even mothers spending hours a day online indulging their Q obsession. We’ve reached a “QAnon tipping point,” said Charlie Warzel in *NYTimes.com*. A leaked internal Facebook study found there are more than 3 million members of QAnon groups. In April, a knife-wielding Q follower was arrested while driving to “take out” Joe Biden. With Greene going to Congress, a niche online conspiracy theory has fully “metastasized” into “a legitimate threat to safety and even democracy.”

Kanye: How Trump's allies are using him

"Ready or not," said Ryan Bort in *RollingStone.com*, "Kanye 2020 is happening." Rapper Kanye West, 43, has secured ballot spots in five states so far—Colorado, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Utah, and Vermont—for his third-party bid for the presidency, and he's getting plenty of help from allies of President Trump. West recently met with Jared Kushner, President Trump's son-in-law and de facto campaign manager, for a "friendly discussion," as Kushner put it. In fact, Kushner reportedly speaks to West nearly every day. Meanwhile, "GOP-affiliated operative types" are scrambling in battleground states like Ohio and Wisconsin to amass enough signatures to get West's name on the ballot there. The goal, of course, is to help Trump's re-election bid by siphoning voters away from presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden—which West doesn't dispute. "I'm not denying it," he said. Trump, for his part, claimed not to be pushing West's candidacy, but conceded, "I think it's great."



West: Running to draw votes from Biden

Even for Trump and his allies, this is a new low, said Molly Roberts in *The Washington Post*. West's wife, Kim Kardashian West, says her hus-

band has been struggling with a very public bipolar episode in which he tearfully said he'd nearly aborted their first daughter, and attacked family members for trying to get him psychiatric help. But the Trump campaign is hoping that West will draw a crucial sliver of black votes, the way third-party candidates Jill Stein and Gary Johnson drew enough protest votes to help Trump eke out a victory over Hillary Clinton in 2016. Republicans truly must be "desperate" if they think African-Americans will cast ballots for West—a known Trump fan—just because he's black.

It's far from certain that West would help Trump, anyway, said Brian Doherty in *Reason.com*. He's only polling at 2 percent nationally, and his platform includes such conservative-leaning planks as a return to school prayer and getting federal aid for faith-based groups. West is still dangerous, said Dylan Scott in *Vox.com*. "The 2016 election was decided by 100,000 or so votes in three states," including fewer than 23,000 in Wisconsin. Even 2 percent this year could change the outcome in a crucial state. "The stakes are too high for West to be dismissed as a joke."

Wit & Wisdom

"Lord, make me chaste, but not yet."
Augustine of Hippo, quoted in The Washington Post

"Anger is a prelude to courage."
Philosopher Eric Hoffer, quoted in Forbes.com

"Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope."
Maya Angelou, quoted in BuzzFeed.com

"A puritan is a person who pours righteous indignation into the wrong things."
G.K. Chesterton, quoted in ArtsJournal.com

"What we call our despair is often only the painful eagerness of unfed hope."
George Eliot, quoted in Parade

"Always do sober what you said you'd do drunk. That will teach you to keep your mouth shut."
Ernest Hemingway, quoted in the Montreal Gazette

"If life is going to exist in a Universe of this size, then the one thing it cannot afford to have is a sense of proportion."
Author Douglas Adams, quoted in TheMillions.com

College football: Another Covid casualty

"It's not quite as bad as canceling Thanksgiving," said Stephen Collinson and Caitlin Hu in *CNN.com*. "But it's close." The college football season was thrown into chaos last week when two of the Power Five conferences—the Big Ten and Pac-12—pulled out, "reasoning there's no safe way to play in the middle of a pandemic." The decision came after at least five Big Ten Conference athletes who were infected with the coronavirus developed myocarditis, a potentially fatal inflammation of the heart muscle that can leave lasting damage. A number of smaller conferences and individual schools have also pulled the plug. It's a momentous turn of events in a country where "college football is a religion"—and a multibillion-dollar business. President Trump and other Republicans called on the remaining conferences to play their seasons. Trump understands that canceling this staple of American life will "shatter his fantasy world," in which the virus is under control and all is well.

Canceling is the only sane move, said Will Leitch in *NBCNews.com*. Sadly, three of the Power Five conferences still plan on having unpaid students play a "collision-based sport amidst the greatest public health crisis in 100 years." Their denial of science falls right in line with "the kind of selfish

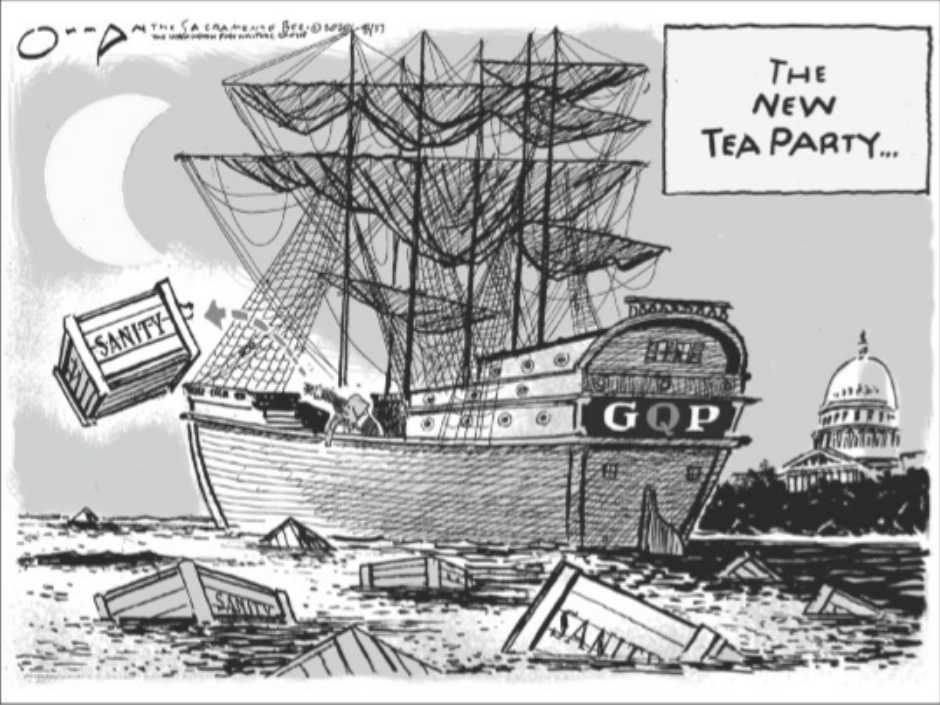
thinking that has made America an international joke." Not incidentally, nine University of Oklahoma players tested positive for the virus this week. The fears of Covid are overblown, said *WashingtonExaminer.com* in an editorial. Given the "extremely low risks" to young players and the "great benefit that college sports confer" on players, spectators, and colleges themselves, to abandon the field "would be both irrational and irresponsible."

In this presidential election year, the cancellation of games is becoming a political issue, said Tina Nguyen in *Politico.com*. MAGA world is blaming it on "the Trump-hating Left," claiming it is Democratic fraidy-cats and health officials who are shutting down the all-American sport. It's actually Trump who might get blamed, said Reid Epstein and Nick Corasaniti in *The New York Times*. As Americans mourn the loss of the "tailgating, jammed stadiums, and marching bands," some are already directing their ire at Trump's mismanagement of the crisis, especially as they see European soccer and South Korean baseball carry on. "Trump just blew it," said Ohio Buckeyes fan Dennis Kuchta. "It's a huge loss, and I don't think people realize that yet."

Poll watch

■ **75%** of Americans believe it's likely that Russia or other foreign government will interfere in the upcoming elections, including **62%** of Republicans and **88%** of Democrats. **78%** of Democrats, but just **37%** of Republicans, think such interference is a "major problem." Pew Research

■ **54%** of Americans approve of Joe Biden's pick of Sen. Kamala Harris for vice president, including **86%** of Democrats and **52%** of independents. Among Republicans, **25%** approve of the choice, and **55%** don't. ABC News/The Washington Post



Gig platforms: Uber and Lyft vs. California

A judge in California last week handed Uber and Lyft a crucial setback in “a court battle the gig industry can’t afford to lose,” said **Clare Roth** in *Bloomberg.com*. In unambiguous terms, Judge Ethan Schulman in San Francisco dispatched the ride-sharing companies’ effort to exempt themselves from a new state law reclassifying their drivers as employees rather than contractors. Uber and Lyft argued that their drivers aren’t “employees” because they’re not “transportation companies” but platforms that facilitate an exchange between customers and sole proprietors. Schulman called this “nonsense.”



Can they rewrite California’s labor law?

Gig economy workers do deserve a better deal, and I understand why many people want to blame us, said **Dara Khosrowshahi**, the chief executive officer of Uber, in *The New York Times*. But their problem isn’t us or other gig economy platforms. It’s an “outdated and unfair” employment system. “Uber is ready, right now, to pay more to give drivers new benefits and protections.” Our drivers are limited by a binary model that forces them to choose between a safety net and the freedom to set their own schedules. The solution is not to make them employees but to require a gig-economy company to establish a fund that will cover time off, subsidized health insurance, and other benefits our workers want.

Uber has gutted driver protections at every turn, said **Shoshana Wodinsky** in *Gizmodo.com*, and now claims the problem is *the government*. Khosrowshahi knows that many Uber drivers work 40, 50, or 60 hours a week, and it’s Uber that’s “dictating the level of flexibility of its own platform.” Now he wants to give drivers a bit more cash, while having Uber rewrite labor law “in its own image.” Indeed, it’s no surprise that Uber wants to foist its own government mandates on us, said **Timothy Carney** in *WashingtonExaminer.com*. This is a “tried and true tactic” of

businesses hoping to kill smaller competitors and create barriers to entry. Uber knows it could get that benefits fund filled with a “snap of its fingers,” while Lyft and Via would have a harder time. Tobacco companies, tax preparers, and Facebook have all tried similar “regulatory robbery.”

Whether it involves competitors or the public, bullying is Uber’s stock-in-trade, said **Michael Hiltzik** in the *Los Angeles Times*. Now it’s threatening to pull out of California. The state should call its bluff. This decision wasn’t a “bolt from the blue.” Uber claims that it’s too burdensome to comply with a ruling that’s been expected since 2018. “What was Uber waiting for?” Beats me, but it would surely miss not having access to Los Angeles and San Francisco, two of Uber’s five largest markets.

Innovation of the week

The Chinese phone maker ZTE appears to be the first company ready to launch a phone with an under-display camera, said Taylor Lyles in *TheVerge.com*. The innovation represents a breakthrough for smartphone designers, who have been “teasing” prototypes for phones “that include a front camera hidden beneath the screen” for more than a year. Companies have been moving toward “smartphones with edge-to-edge screens” that offer cleaner visuals for streaming movies or gaming. Some manufacturers, including Lenovo, have introduced “selfie” cameras that pop up from the side of the phone, but an under-display camera is “a more elegant solution without moving parts inside the phone.” Leaked images of ZTE’s Axon 20 5G, which is expected to launch in China in September, show a perfectly smooth OLED display, which conceals a 32-megapixel front camera.



Bytes: What’s new in tech

App stores block new Fortnite

Epic Games sued Apple and Google last week after they pulled the wildly popular *Fortnite* from their app stores, said Jack Nicas in *The New York Times*. The clash over the world’s most popular video game started with “a clear provocation”: Epic began encouraging *Fortnite*’s mobile-app users to pay it directly, rather than through Apple or Google. This violated the companies’ policies requiring a 30 percent cut of revenue from in-app purchases. *Fortnite* remains available on Android devices because Google “allows people to download apps outside its app store.” But the confrontation with Apple has higher stakes, and Epic may be Apple’s “toughest adversary in years.” Epic even released a commercial echoing Apple’s own iconic “1984” ad from its fight against IBM—this time depicting *Fortnite* characters “defying Apple’s totalitarian regime.”

The fleeting joy of social media

You may spend less time on Facebook than you imagine, said Devin Coldewey in *TechCrunch.com*. A study from Facebook comparing self-reported statistics about social media usage versus actual server logs revealed some surprising discrepancies. “Despite what they thought, very few people actually spent more

than three hours on the site per day, with the vast majority spending about one.” Though the total amount of time spent on the app was surprisingly low—on average, three hours a day less than self-reported estimates—people dramatically *underestimated* how often they used the app. Few people in the study “thought they opened the app 10 times a day or more, yet that was extremely common.”

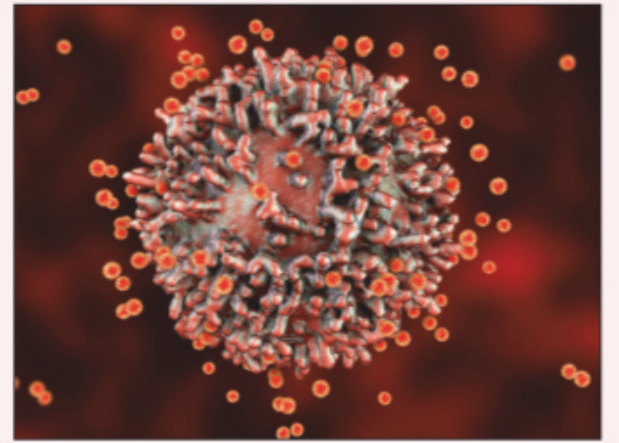
Wikipedia’s election war

Kamala Harris’ Wikipedia page became a “battleground” shortly after she was named as Joe Biden’s choice for vice president, said Joshua Benton in *TheAtlantic.com*. Wikipedia is the “free encyclopedia that anyone can edit,” and the wording on its pages depends on “consensus” among editors. Harris’ page was altered 295 times in less than 24 hours, with many changes to the descriptions of her race that echoed attacks from conservatives who “question the validity of her blackness.” Administrators and seniors editors noted “the many years of news stories and official documents that have identified her” as African-American, but others disagreed because of her biracial background. The site (for now) says she is African-American and Asian-American, as she is described in her Senate bio.

A clue to why some people don't get sick

Evidence is mounting that many people may be partly resistant to the coronavirus because their immune systems have been primed to recognize and fight off similar infections. Scientists suspect that “memory” T cells could be the key to this immune response. The working theory is that previous battles with related coronaviruses, such as the four that cause the common cold, may have “taught” T cells how to ward off the new virus. Researchers say this might explain some curious trends in the epidemiology of the pandemic, including why some 40 percent of infected people develop no

symptoms. One recent U.S. study found that T cells in blood donated from 2015 and 2018—long before the coronavirus even existed—appeared to recognize the virus when presented with it. Researchers in other countries report similar findings: In a recent study from Singapore, 50 percent of uninfected people had T cells that react to the coronavirus. Some scientists think that because T cells typically last for years, they might ultimately prove more important in the fight against Covid-19 than antibodies, which may survive only a couple of months. “The immune system is basically a memory machine,” Alessandro Sette,



An illustration of T cells attacking the virus

from Southern California's La Jolla Institute for Immunology, tells *The Washington Post*. “It remembers and fights back stronger.”



E-cig users are more likely to catch Covid-19.

A viral risk for young vapers

Teenagers and young adults who use e-cigarettes are up to seven times more likely to be infected with the coronavirus than their nonvaping peers, new research suggests. Stanford University researchers surveyed some 4,300 13- to 24-year-olds for the first nationwide study into the connection between vaping and Covid-19 in young people. Those who had used e-cigarettes were five times more likely to have been diagnosed with Covid-19 than those who hadn't, while respondents who'd used both e-cigarettes and regular cigarettes within the previous 30 days were 6.8 times more likely to be diagnosed. “We were surprised,” senior author Bonnie Halpern-Felsher tells *NBCNews.com*. “We expected to maybe see some relationship, but certainly not at the odds ratios and the significance that we're seeing it here.” Several factors may be at play. Vaping can damage lungs and hamper the immune system, making each exposure to the coronavirus more likely to trigger an infection. Many behaviors associated with vaping—hand-to-mouth contact, sharing e-cigs—are also risky in a pandemic.

An ocean on Ceres

The dwarf planet Ceres—the largest object in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter—has been dismissed by many astronomers as a barren space rock. But a new analysis

of images snapped by NASA's Dawn spacecraft suggests Ceres is in fact an “ocean world” with a vast subterranean reservoir of seawater. Dawn orbited the asteroid from 2015 to 2018 and captured high-resolution shots of the 20 million-year-old Occator crater while flying 22 miles above the surface. Previous studies highlighted deposits on the crater that hinted at the presence of salty water below ground. Using infrared imaging, researchers spotted the compound hydrohalite—a material common in sea ice that has never previously been seen beyond Earth. The deposits likely built up in the past 2 million years, and the brine may still be ascending from Ceres' interior. Lead author Maria Cristina De Sanctis tells Agence France-Presse it is an “extremely important” discovery because the minerals are “essential for the emergence of life.”

'Smoking gun' on aerosols

Scientists say they have found the first clear proof that the coronavirus can spread through the air, reports *The New York Times*. Previous studies have identified

genetic traces of the virus in aerosols—tiny droplets that are emitted when a person breathes, speaks, coughs, or sneezes and that can float in the air for minutes. But until now there was no conclusive evidence that aerosols could contain live virus and thus spread the disease. For the new study, researchers at the University of Florida created a device that uses water vapor to enlarge the microscopic aerosols so they can be harvested from the air. Using this technique, the team isolated live virus from aerosols collected at a distance of up to 16 feet from patients hospitalized with Covid-19. That's well beyond the 6 feet recommended for physical distancing—a recommendation based on the idea that the virus can only be transmitted by much larger droplets that quickly fall to the ground. While some experts say it's still not clear whether the amount of virus in aerosols is enough to cause infection, others think the debate is over. “If this isn't a smoking gun,” says Linsey Marr, a specialist in the airborne spread of viruses who was not involved in the study, “then I don't know what is.”

Meet the 'terror crocodile'

A dinosaur taking a drink from a river or lake in North America during the late Cretaceous period needed to stay alert—because lurking in the water there might be a “terror crocodile” as big as a city bus and with teeth the size of bananas. Until now, little was known about *Deinosuchus*, reports *CNN.com*. But a new study of old fossil specimens has shed more light on their extraordinary size and power. These beasts, which lived 75 million to 82 million years ago, could reach up to 33 feet



A heavyweight dino hunter

in length and weighed more than the largest predatory dinosaurs that existed at the same time. Although “*Deinosuchus*” is named for a species of crocodile, the genus more closely resembles the alligator. Two mysterious holes at the tip of its broad snout make it distinct from both crocs and gators. “It was a strange animal,” says co-author Christopher Brochu, from the University of Iowa. One big mystery remains about *Deinosuchus*: what happened to it. The creature died out before the mass extinction event that killed off the dinosaurs—and scientists don't know why.

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

Veritas: A Harvard Professor, a Con Man and the Gospel of Jesus's Wife

by Ariel Sabar (Doubleday, \$30)

Back in 2012, a story that briefly raced around the world raised “the tantalizing possibility of an entirely different Christian history,” said **Lucas Wittmann** in *Time*. At an academic conference in Rome, Harvard Divinity School professor Karen King presented a scrap of papyrus bearing snatches of Coptic text including a partial sentence indicating that Jesus may have had a wife. Centuries of church doctrine suddenly teetered. “But there was one problem”: The document, as journalist Ariel Sabar later helped confirm, was a forgery. Sabar’s new book, which fleshes out the exposé he wrote in 2016 for *The Atlantic*, offers revealing glimpses of the antiquities trade, the history of ancient Christian texts, and the often eccentric scholars who study them. Above all, “it’s a story about journalism done right.”



Professor King with her dubious find

“The book is as good as a detective novel,” said **Katherine Powers** in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. When a self-described collector reached out to King to share the fragment, the Harvard scholar was initially skeptical but eventually agreed to give it a look, then championed it. Other scholars quickly questioned the document—asking why, for example, the Coptic text contained a galling grammatical error. But King defended her conclusion 18 months later in the *Harvard Theological Review*. We’re only a third into the book by this point, said **Alex**

Beam in *The Wall Street Journal*. “Sabar is toying with us. He has our attention, and slowly, remorselessly, he pays out the rest of his devilish yarn.” King had built her career on scholarship about women’s roles in early Christianity, and she had enlisted friendly scholars to review her work. But Sabar was on the case, and he discovered that the source of the papyrus, Walter Fritz, was a Florida pornographer who’d fabricated the document. King missed the warning signs, Sabar writes, because ideology blinded her.

Such blunders have happened before, said **Candida Moss** in *TheDailyBeast.com*. “It’s tempting and, in fact, customary to guard research on news-making discoveries—only more so when one has faced hostility and opposition in the past—and to push forward to publication.” Unfortunately, King’s fiasco is likely to taint feminist biblical scholarship for years. Still, all scholarly work requires a rigorous testing of conclusions, and the failure wasn’t King’s alone, said **Mark Oppenheimer** in *The New York Times*. “She was abetted by a world of academics and higher-ed bureaucrats who forgot that, if we are wise, we should be most gratified to learn when we are wrong.”

Novel of the week

Luster

by Raven Leilani

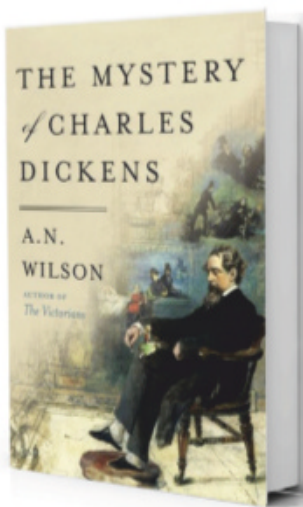
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, \$26)

“You could be forgiven for thinking that adultery, a cornerstone of so many great 19th-century novels, had been exhausted as a subject,” said **Alexandra Schwartz** in *The New Yorker*. But Raven Leilani’s “mordant, bruising” debut makes infidelity newly revealing. Edie, a 23-year-old publishing lackey, begins sleeping with a married man and eventually is invited—by his wife—to live in the couple’s suburban home. Given that the couple is white and Edie is black, it’s refreshing that Edie is “neither heroic nor unduly tragic,” said **Parul Sehgal** in *The New York Times*. Still, her recklessness ends up being too neatly explained and *Luster* a “perfectly agreeable if uneven first novel.” But in a surprise turn, said **Josephine Livingstone** in *The New Republic*, we learn that the couple has an adopted black daughter who needs a role model, and we read to find out how Edie responds. In this, “*Luster* seems like the first crashing of a new wave of fiction”—fiction that rejects hyperindividualism, insisting instead that “being a person involves certain ethical obligations to other people.”

The Mystery of Charles Dickens

by A.N. Wilson

(Harper, \$32.50)



Charles Dickens was a knot of contradictions, said **Henry Hitchings** in *The Wall Street Journal*. In A.N. Wilson’s new book, a “sprightly work of reinterpretation,” the great 19th-century novelist “comes across as a man who, cramming multiple lifetimes into one, continually maneuvered between different identities.” He co-founded a women’s charity but was monstrous to his wife. He never forgave his mother for forcing him into child labor but hid that personal history from his own children. Wilson, a prolific author himself, paints Dickens as a cruel, oversexed egotist but focuses on that dark side with the ardor of a fan. His aim is an examination of the mysteries of Dickens’ character, and “the fundamental mystery for Wilson is how a man he finds atrocious could have spoken to him so deeply.”

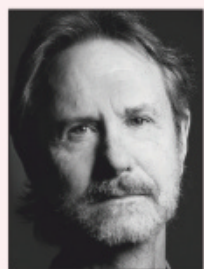
As Wilson analyzes Dickens, “he leads the reader by the hand, like one of the ghosts in *A Christmas Carol*, to visit various moments in the writer’s life,” said **Cordelia Jenkins** in the *Financial Times*. We see Dickens first on his dying day, which allows Wilson to build a circumstantial case that the 58-year-old’s heart failed during sex with his mistress before he was secretly transported home. We will also see him at 12, working in a shoe-polish factory while his parents are in debtor’s prison. We see him onstage at the height of his fame, ecstatically acting out the scene from *Oliver Twist* when the burglar Bill Sikes beats a prostitute to death. Wilson invokes the term “a divided self” to explain Dickens, but the diagnosis is “only partly satisfying.”

It’s the way the case is made that enthralls, said **Robert Douglas-Fairhurst** in *The Spectator* (U.K.). In the final chapter, Wilson reveals that he first latched onto Dickens’ novels as a student regularly beaten by a sadistic boarding school headmaster who was aroused by the violence. Dickens wrote about such worlds, which made Wilson’s endurable. Because he has brought passion and a restless curiosity to this project, it often reads as more than a Dickens portrait; “it reads often more like something written by Dickens.”

Author of the week

Ron Rash

"It hasn't been an easy glide to the top of Mount Parnassus," said **Bronwen Dickey** in *Garden & Gun*. But Ron Rash, who today is the blue-collar bard of southern Appalachia, has always been willing to reach literature's greatest heights. Now 66, the author of *Serena* and nearly two dozen other works of poetry and fiction committed



to writing at 28 and spent the next two decades honing his craft. He approached it like the distance runner he's been since high school. While teaching full-time, he woke early to write almost daily. He also threw away two finished novels before earning publication of *One Foot in Eden*, when he was 49. Even today he remains convinced that persistence can lift a story from failing to transcendent. "The days you'd rather stick pencils in your eyes than write," he says, "are the days that'll make you a writer."

Rash has a gift for pulling universal tragedies out of ordinary lives, said **Tom Mayer** in the Boone, N.C., *Mountain Times*. His new story collection, *In the Valley*, is set, like all of his previous books, in southern Appalachia. And most of the characters are "a little better than their circumstances give them a chance to be," to use one of Rash's favorite William Faulkner lines. The glaring exception is the ruthless 1930s lumber baroness who dominates the book's title novella. Serena Pemberton is a force of destruction in a world full of destructive forces. But Rash would never write a book where the average person had no hope. "You're seeing people in trouble," he says. "But I hope you're also seeing people who rise above it. People who fight it. To me, that's also important."

Best books...chosen by Erin Morgenstern

Erin Morgenstern is the best-selling author of *The Night Circus* and *The Starless Sea*. That second novel, now out in paperback, features a magical underground library and mentions or alludes to many of her favorite works, including the six below.



The Little Stranger by Sarah Waters (2009). I tend to be a setting-focused writer, so I gravitate to books with settings that become part of the story. My favorite house stories are the ones, like this English ghost story, where the house feels like a character: a living, breathing creature that's so much more than just a building.

The Castle of Crossed Destinies by Italo Calvino (1973). I love a good fantasy, but I'm even more fond of stories that take reality and tip it ever so gently over into the fantastical. I'm also fascinated by the ways Calvino plays with structure and how stories are told, in this case laid out as tarot cards upon a table.

The Big Sleep by Raymond Chandler (1939). A few years ago, I went through a noir phase and read all the Chandler and Hammett I could get my hands on. I love how mystery can propel a narrative, especially when that mystery is dimly lit and wearing something slinky and drinking a martini.

The Secret History by Donna Tartt (1992). A whodunit more than a whodunit, *The Secret History* grabbed me from its perfect first sentence, and across 500 pages and beyond, I don't think it ever let go. Tartt's celebrated debut also allowed me to work the phrase "bacchanalian murderousness" into *The Starless Sea*.

A Wrinkle in Time by Madeleine L'Engle (1962). I first read *A Wrinkle in Time* at age 9 or 10, and of all the story's wondrous elements, it's the beginning that stays with me the most: In the attic of a regular house on a stormy night, an unhappy girl is shivering under a patchwork quilt just as something is about to change.

The Odyssey by Homer. This is one of the books that I return to over and over again, and I now have two copies of Emily Wilson's wonderful new translation so that I can take notes in the paperback. I was hoping to keep the hard-cover pristine—but it has been nibbled on by a kitten.

Also of interest...the first wave of Covid literature

Intimations

by Zadie Smith (Penguin, \$11)



Zadie Smith is "a spectacular essayist," even better, I'd say, than she is a novelist, said David Ulin in the *Los Angeles Times*. In this collection of six new essays about life during the pandemic, she excels at "the essential job of the essayist: to explore not our innocence but our complicity"—doing so by precisely detailing her own shortcomings as a member of the human tribe during the current crisis. At one point, she admits aching to bolt while a neighbor she meets on the street complains of loneliness. In a powerful book, it's "my favorite moment."

Wuhan Diary

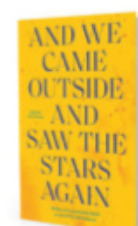
by Fang Fang (HarperVia, \$20)



"The urgency of this account is impossible to deny," said Dwight Garner in *The New York Times*. Its author, Chinese novelist Fang Fang, became a national hero when she defied censors to blog daily about living in Wuhan during the long shutdown that followed Covid's outbreak. She notes various kindnesses but "zeroes in on dark scenes," such as a pile of victims' cellphones that accumulate at a funeral home. This e-book "would have been twice as good at half the length," but it's frequently powerful.

And We Came Outside and Saw the Stars Again

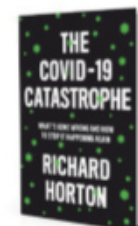
edited by Ilan Stavans (Restless, \$22)



In the midst of any crisis, "mess and chaos are the forms that speak best to painful realities," said Lily Meyer in *The Atlantic*. Fittingly, this new anthology of Covid-related writing from various nations "juxtaposes styles—poetry next to literary criticism, experimental fiction next to personal essay—in a way that is sometimes jarring, but pleasantly so." Mario Vargas Llosa and Teresa Solana argue the pros and cons of Spain's response, for example, while Lynne Tillman conveys her mindset in anxious prose that "turns into a breathless pileup."

The Covid-19 Catastrophe

by Richard Horton (Polity, \$15)



In Covid-19, Richard Horton "has found a cause that matches his energy," said Stephen Buranyi in *Nature*. The new book from the outspoken editor of *The Lancet*, a leading British medical journal, is a rushed product, "a sort of history, diagnosis, and prescription" that he assembled on the fly. But it powerfully assails Boris Johnson, Donald Trump, and their respective advisers for failing utterly to arrest the virus' spread. Though the book won't be the definitive account, "it has lessons that are useful right now."

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME-

the biggest Internet portal,
providing you various content:
brand new books, trending movies,
fresh magazines, hot games,
recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price

Cheap constant access to piping hot media

Protect your downloadings from Big brother

Safer, than torrent-trackers

18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages

Brand new content

One site



AVXLIVE.icu

AvaxHome - Your End Place

We have everything for all of your needs. Just open <https://avxlive.icu>

Song of the summer: Cardi B and Megan's bold provocation

The song lasts just three minutes, said **Tom Breihan** in *Stereogum.com*. But “in a summer that’s been hopelessly devoid of crowd-pleasing spectacle,” Cardi B and Megan Thee Stallion’s new single and music video are “the closest thing we have to a new *Avengers* movie.” A raunchy celebration of female sexual prowess and pleasure, “WAP” became an instant No. 1 *Billboard* hit recognized by *The New York Times* as “almost certainly the most graphic and explicit ever to reach the top.” And of course the song and video triggered a mini culture war. One Republican congressional candidate tweeted that the lyrics “made me want to pour holy water in my ears.” Another wrote that Cardi and Meg had “set the entire female gender back by 100 years.” But that was expected, said **Cassie Da Costa** in *TheDailyBeast.com*. And the two rap stars are “taking all hand-wringing in stride, carrying on with the kind of self-confidence that a politics of respectability cannot supply.”

“WAP” is shorthand for “wet-ass p---,” and “the lyrics get even less Shakespearean



Cardi and Meg in the snake den: Untroubled by the haters

from there,” said *Spectator.us*. When conservative radio and podcast host Ben Shapiro recited a censored version on air, he was widely mocked by liberals who missed the intentional humor, said **Matt Purple** in *TheAmericanConservative.com*. Instead, he was labeled a puritan by “the same people who spent the last two months trembling in front of *Gone With the Wind*” and whose only complaint about the “WAP” video is that it includes a cameo by Kylie Jenner, who isn’t black. The greater irony is that “WAP” is “the least sexy song

and video that have come around in a long time,” said **Libby Emmons** in *TheFederalist.com*. Just as when guys brag about their penises, women explicitly bragging about their vaginas turns out to be “banal, trite, and dull.”

The video is actually hilarious, a “goofily over-the-top” romp through an *Alice in Wonderland* mansion filled with tigers, snakes, and erotic sculptures, said **Ty Burr** in *The Boston Globe*. But what’s so new? “Vulgar sexuality is a hal- lowed aspect of American popular culture,” routinely renewed by youthful rebellions against the puritanical side of our national character. The “dirty blues” singers of the 1930s passed the tradition to Elvis Presley, who passed it to Prince. If there’s a difference this time, it’s that with “WAP,” it’s “not just a woman but a black woman—two black women—singing about the joys of sex with unapologetic glee, and ‘WAP’ shows you what it looks like, more and less, when a woman of color takes charge.” That dynamic, alas, is “still taboo in many corners of this country.”

Godspell

Colonial Theater, Pittsfield, Mass., through Sept. 4 ★★★★★



Edwards as Jesus: Spreading love, not germs

There are revivals, and then there are revivals, said **Ben Brantley** in *The New York Times*. In this most unusual year, a new summer production of 1971’s *Godspell*, even one staged in a tent behind a theater in Massachusetts’ Berkshires, “qualifies as something of a miracle.” To mount the first professionally produced musical in the country since Covid-19 struck, the Colonial Theatre in Pittsfield had to keep spectators and actors masked and distanced—dictums that have been “hard enough to enforce in supermarkets,” let alone during performances of “one of the huggiest musicals ever created.” But Stephen Schwartz’s gently countercultural retelling of various gospel parables benefits from the forced

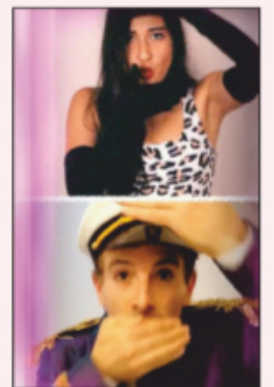
isolation of the actors, even from their having to sing behind transparent panels. The familiar material—always more favored by progressive church audiences than critics—speaks to our current mindset. “There’s a new sense of reflectiveness here, and you actually feel you’re seeing the show’s precepts put into action.”

The 2020 intrusions become “a nearly natural part of the show,” said **Terry Byrne** in *The Boston Globe*. “All for the Best,” a vaudevillian-style duet between Nicholas Edwards’ Jesus and Tim Jones’ Judas, features “a soft-shoe hand-sanitizing moment.” And Isabel Jordan leads the ensemble in a bilingual version of the folk-gospel jam “Day by Day.” The lone flop, a gender-switched “Turn Back, O Man,” loses the song’s intended sultriness, said **Steve Barnes** in the Albany, N.Y., *Times-Union*. And despite its creative successes, this *Godspell* will likely be remembered as “an instant period piece” rather than a model for future productions. Still, it’s one to savor, especially as performed by young actors who haven’t seen a live audience in months. “Their earnestness is touching, their passion genuine, their occasional tears honestly earned.”

A Killer Party

★★★★★

Murder mysteries are usually dinner-theater fare, said **Michael Schulman** in *The New Yorker*. But this new musical collaboration, featuring a dozen Broadway regulars whose performances were taped in their separate homes, “has the dopey, DIY exuberance of theater people who are going a little nuts in quarantine.” In nine bite-size episodes, we get to know a regional troupe whose loathed impresario, played by *Aladdin*’s Michael James Scott, initiates the action by hosting a dinner party to discuss his new play, a convoluted whodunit. What happens after he suddenly expires during the soup course? A convoluted whodunit. The story is “not the star here,” said **Jesse Green** in *The New York Times*. Appealing performances, eccentric characters, and a “peppy” synth-filled pop score fill the gaps. For anyone who misses theater, *A Killer Party* should prove “cheerful and silly enough to compensate for an almost total lack of coherence.” \$13, *akillerpartymusical.com*



Stacked suspects

Return to the multiplex: Is the reopening coming too soon?

“American theaters are starting to come back to life,” said Tyler Aquilina in *EW.com*. More than 1,000 of the nation’s roughly 5,700 indoor movie venues were open last weekend, with hundreds more planning to unlock their doors over the next three weeks. By the time Christopher Nolan’s thrice-delayed thriller *Tenet* hits the big screen on Sept. 3, the biggest chains expect to be operating multiplexes in all 43 states that allow theaters to open. AMC, Regal, and Cinemark—which together control nearly half the 41,000 screens in America—have all established new health protocols, including reduced capacities in most locations and auditorium sanitization between screenings. But at the moment when the arrival of *Unhinged* gives U.S. theater operators their first moderately wide new release in months (see below), the country remains “nowhere close to containing the coronavirus.”

Please don’t buy a ticket yourself, said Adam Rosenberg in *Mashable.com*. Spending 90 minutes or more indoors with a large group of strangers is a “terrible idea,” a super-spreader event waiting to happen.



Ticket buyers at a reopened Cinemark in Las Vegas

The movie chains are relying on half measures, requiring masks, for example, but allowing viewers to remove them while they munch on popcorn. Given the mixed messages that have come from the White House, you’ll also get plenty of people “ripping off their masks as soon as the trailers get started, in some kind of misguided political action.” What’s more, while AMC will limit occupancy to 30 percent, Regal will cap it at 50—and only where required by local mandate. In other words, “visiting a Regal theater means you may be dealing with a packed house.” If that’s what going to the movies looks like in 2020,

“your better bet is to just skip theaters entirely until this pandemic is more under control.”

The next few weeks will be telling, said Rebecca Rubin in *Variety.com*. No new American movie can be a blockbuster here at home while seating capacities are limited and no theaters are allowed to open in New York and California. Studios and exhibitors will be trusting word of mouth, and not just to nurture a long run for any one movie. In addition, “they’ll be relying on customers telling others that they felt safe seeing a movie in theaters.” For film buffs who aren’t convinced, said Emma Stefansky in *Thrillist.com*, Alamo Drafthouse might offer the only solution around. The 41-theater chain that serves drinks and dinner during every movie recently introduced a “Your Own Private Alamo” program at two locations, enabling any cinephile and up to 30 friends to rent the entire venue for \$150. The renting party has to spend another \$150 on food, and each guest must buy a ticket. “But still! That’s a pretty good price for the full Alamo experience *and* the ability to feel safe.”



Crowe: An American monster

Unhinged



“A year from now, we’ll have forgotten *Unhinged*,” said Michael Phillips in the *Chicago Tribune*. But today, this “sadistic yet middling” road-rage thriller is arriving in theaters as the first wide-release movie of the post-lockdown era, and anyone who sees it will remember that Russell Crowe brought the sauce. Playing an already murderous psycho who turns his wrath on a single mother who makes the mistake of honking at him in traffic, the 2001 Oscar winner “delivers a big box of acting,” complete with menacing purrs, “a vague gumbo accent,” and bear grunts. Unfortunately, beyond an unhinged Crowe and the gruesome, gratuitous violence, “there’s barely a movie there.” Crowe’s madman at least proves inventive, said Richard Roeper in the *Chi-*

cago Sun-Times. He trails Caren Pistorius’ Rachel to a gas station, steals her phone, and begins killing people she knows. “That’s admittedly creative (albeit nasty) stuff,” and director Derrick Borte also delivers solid car chases and crashes. But after pretending to have something to say about our stressful times, *Unhinged* reveals itself to be “about as deep as a second-tier *Halloween* movie.” If you try to psychoanalyze the main character, you’re wasting your time, said Guy Lodge in *Variety*. “The carnage is the point here, and Borte and Crowe bring it to a suitably furious head: Some movies just want to watch the world burn, preferably on a very big screen.” *Rated R*

New movies on demand

Tesla

This daring new portrait of inventor Nikola Tesla “will not be for everyone,” said David Rooney in *The Hollywood Reporter*. Film-maker Michael Almereyda playfully mixes truth with fiction and present with past, but his deep interest in deciphering Tesla makes for a character study “charged with constantly surprising vitality.” Ethan Hawke, meanwhile, takes a recessive character and breathes “brooding magnetism” into him. Eve Hewson co-stars and Kyle MacLachlan plays Thomas Edison. (\$7) *PG-13*

Desert One

With this in-depth account of a critical 1980 mission, “one of America’s greatest documentary filmmakers adds another exclamation

point to her resume,” said Roger Moore in *RogersMovieNation.com*. Barbara Kopple’s “thoroughly engrossing” film doesn’t answer every question about the failed Special Forces bid to rescue U.S. hostages held in Iran, but participants, Iranian hostage takers, and Jimmy Carter all contribute to an “unsparing” look at an event that altered history. (\$10, *loftcinema.org*) *Not rated*

Represent

Three underdogs battle for more than votes in this “imperfect but insightful” political documentary, said Carla Meyer in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. All three should have been presented as members of a post-2016 wave of female candidates, but they are each compelling: a 22-year-old running for mayor of Detroit, an Ohioan challenging her town’s GOP establishment, and a Korean-American Republican fighting gerrymandering. (\$12, *musicboxtheatre.com*) *Not rated*

Sputnik

Though the premise “won’t be alien to anyone who’s seen *Alien*,” said Joe Morgenstern in *The Wall Street Journal*, this Russian import rises above the average creature feature. When a Soviet cosmonaut returns from space harboring a parasite, a controversial doctor is assigned to treat him. Oksana Akinshina is subtly powerful as the physician, and Fedor Bondarchuk brings “a steely malevolence” to the role of her nemesis, a general who envisions a military application for the space beast. (\$7) *Not rated*

Streaming tips

Five classic black sitcoms...

Moesha

Netflix recently acquired streaming rights to several classic black sitcoms and inaugurated its "Strong Black Lead" strand by releasing all six seasons of *Moesha*, the 1990s coming-of-age comedy starring singer Brandy Norwood. Other pickups, including *Girlfriends*, will follow in upcoming weeks. *Netflix*

Living Single

Before *Girlfriends*, even before *Friends*, *Living Single* created the template for a comedy about a group of 1990s urban professionals who spend most of their off hours together. Crucially, they occupied neighboring apartments not in Manhattan but in brownstone Brooklyn. And Queen Latifah headlined. *Hulu*

The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air

Now this is a story all about how Will Smith graduated from novelty rapper to multimedia superstar. If you grew up with Will, Uncle Phil, Aunt Viv, and Will's rhythmically challenged cousin Carlton, this is a great time to revisit old memories. *HBO Max*

The Bernie Mac Show

The Cosby Show is probably not going to be streaming anytime soon, but here's a secret: *The Bernie Mac Show* is nearly as good. For five seasons, the late comedian played the flummoxed surrogate father of three children, offering hilarious nuggets of hard-earned parental wisdom in fourth wall-breaking vignettes. *Hulu*

Everybody Hates Chris

Comedian Chris Rock mined his 1980s Brooklyn childhood for comedy gold in this standout series of the mid-aughts. Rock's supremely funny narration pairs nicely with the work of a great cast, which includes Terry Crews as young Chris' father. *Hulu*

The Week's guide to what's worth watching

Rising Phoenix

Though there will be no Olympic games in Tokyo this summer, elite athletes can be found enlivening this documentary about the Paralympic movement. For more than half a century, the Paralympic Games have showcased competitors who transcend physical impairment to excel in one or more sporting events. Athletes profiled include 16-time wheelchair racing medalist Tatyana McFadden and two-time sprinting champion Jonnie Peacock. *Available for streaming Wednesday, Aug. 26, Netflix*

2020 Republican National Convention

Nearly two weeks of unconventional convention speeches are scheduled to be capped by President Trump's address on Thursday night as he accepts his party's nomination for a second term. Even in this strange political season, the long-standing rite offers the nation's chief executive a chance to refine his message and reset a campaign that so far has him trailing challenger Joe Biden in all published national polls. *Thursday, Aug. 27, approx. 10 p.m., most major networks*

Ravi Patel's Pursuit of Happiness

You might not be able to travel the world seeking answers to big questions this summer, but actor Ravi Patel can do it for you. In this four-part docuseries, the affable star of *Meet the Patels* brings family members or a friend along as he chases the perfect work/life balance in South Korea, the ideal retirement in Mexico, and optimal parenting in Japan. *Available for streaming Thursday, Aug. 27, HBO Max*

All Together Now

Auli'i Cravalho, the former voice star of Disney's *Moana*, proves effortlessly charming in this feature-length drama based on a young adult novel by Matthew Quick. Cravalho stars as a talented and charitable high school senior who is invited to audition for a prestigious university music theater program but hasn't admitted to friends that she and her mother are broke and living in a bus. With Justina Machado, Fred Armisen, and Carol Burnett. *Available for streaming Friday, Aug. 28, Netflix*



The lost youth of Get Duked!

Get Duked!

What the world needs now is a great new absurdist comedy. Three juvenile delinquents and a homeschooled nerd are dropped in the Scottish Highlands as part of a survival program meant to straighten them out. But then a deranged, youth-hating duke and his upper-crust friends start shooting to kill, and the battle of hopefully inept forces is on. The silliness is as abundant as the green grass, and so is the sly commentary on intergenerational conflict. *Available for streaming Friday, Aug. 28, Amazon Prime*

Other highlights

Madea's Farewell Play

Tyler Perry plays Madea one last time in the 21st play he's written about a character inspired by his mother and aunt. This time, Madea brings her tough-love approach to a family graduation. *Available for streaming Thursday, Aug. 27, BET+*

The Binge

In a comedy feature that puts a twist on *The Purge*, three 18-year-olds prepare for the one night each year when they're allowed to indulge in drugs and booze. Vince Vaughn co-stars. *Available for streaming Friday, Aug. 28, Hulu*

2020 MTV Video Music Awards

It might be all about the ladies at the virtual VMAs, with Ariana Grande, Billie Eilish, and Lady Gaga dominating nominations. Performers will include Roddy Ricch, the Weeknd, Doja Cat, and BTS. *Sunday, Aug. 30, at 8 p.m., MTV*



Five exes, united in vengeance

Show of the week

Love Fraud

Richard Scott Smith might be the biggest catfish in the history of phony middle-aged romance. For two decades, the serial bigamist used an arsenal of false identities and dull backstories to leave a trail of broken hearts and empty bank accounts across the Midwest. Tired of having their cases ignored, several of Smith's victims banded together and, aided by a female bounty hunter, worked to track him down. This four-part docuseries runs a bit long, but it delivers enough jaw-dropping twists and revelations to become a short-lived obsession. *Sunday, Aug. 30, at 9 p.m., Showtime*

LEISURE

Food & Drink

Briam: A Greek casserole bursting with garden vegetables

In various Mediterranean countries, people have a similar way of creating a delicious and easy meal from the bounty of zucchini, tomatoes, and eggplant produced by their gardens in late summer, said Albert Stumm in *Milk Street* magazine. Greece's version is called *briam*, a casserole in which thinly sliced tomatoes and any number of other vegetables are drenched in olive oil, then alternately layered with rounds of potato and baked. Feta cheese typically is served on the side, to be crumbled on top.

"But as delicious as briam is, it poses a challenge": When you throw many different vegetables into the oven together, some will wind up underdone and some overdone. "Moreover, that hodgepodge approach can produce a muddle of flavors."

For our version, we start the potatoes in a microwave so they'll be fully cooked at the same time as the other vegetables, and we narrow the variety of ingredients as well. Use plum tomatoes instead of round, which are more watery, and avoid using pre-crumbled feta cheese, because it can wind up tasting "overwhelmingly" salty. Done right, briam is excellent warm or at room temperature, and it is always "more than the sum of its parts."



A quick final broil will add a pleasant char.

Recipe of the week

Briam (Greek baked vegetables)

2 lbs Yukon gold potatoes, not peeled, sliced ¼ inch thick
2 medium zucchini, sliced into ½ inch rounds
1 medium red onion (or two large shallots), halved and thinly sliced
4 medium garlic cloves, thinly sliced
6 ripe plum tomatoes, 4 cored and chopped, 2 cored and sliced crosswise into ¼ inch rounds
1 tbsp plus ½ tsp dried oregano
¼ cup plus 2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil

Kosher salt and ground black pepper
2 oz feta cheese, crumbled
¼ cup lightly packed fresh basil, torn (or 3 tbsp chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley or dill)

Heat oven to 475 with a rack in the middle position. In a large microwave-safe bowl, combine potatoes and ¼ cup water. Cover and microwave on high until potatoes are just shy of tender, about 10 minutes, stirring once halfway through.

Pour off and discard any liquid from bottom of bowl. Add zucchini, onion, garlic, chopped tomatoes, 1 tbsp oregano, ¼ cup oil, 1 tbsp salt, and 1 tsp pepper. Toss well, then spread in a 9-by-13-inch broiler-safe baking pan.

Lay tomato slices on top, spacing them evenly. Drizzle with remaining 2 tsp oil, then sprinkle with remaining ½ tsp oregano and ¼ tsp each salt and pepper. Bake until a skewer inserted into vegetables meets no resistance, about 25 minutes.

Turn oven to broil and broil casserole until well browned, about 5 minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with feta. Rest for about 10 minutes, then sprinkle with basil and drizzle with additional oil. Serves 6.

Wine: East Coast sparklers

Long disrespected, hybrid grapes are suddenly fueling "one of the most exciting movements in American wine," said Zachary Sussman in the online magazine *Punch*. Winemakers of the Northeast are now focusing on the grapes that grow best where they are—Cayuga, Concord, Catawba—and creating sparkling wines that express their distinctive strengths.

2019 Oyster River Winegrowers Morphos (\$20). This "mineral" white pét-nat from Maine "goes down easy, balancing a sort of glacier-pool purity with a hint of funk."

2019 Iapetus Figure 1 (\$28). What happens when the Champagne method meets the l'acadie blanc grape? "Imagine a lightning bolt of pineapple and candied lemon striking through a cloud of yeast."

2019 Chépika Catawba Pet' Nat (\$31). This "rosé-like" New York take on the Catawba possesses "a rhubarb-y sourness that accentuates its wild-berry fruit."



Flavor guide: Seven sauces to lift your grilling season

"Barbecue is slowly being redefined in America," said Kat Thompson in *Thrillist.com*. Brisket and ribs are still wonderful, but flavors and ideas from around the world are bringing fresh pleasures to the table. Whether or not you've already made room on the grill for shredded jackfruit or tofu in a sheet pan, you can elevate your grilling game with some of the great jarred or bottled sauces available for marinating or finishing beef, chicken, and other meats.

Fly by Jing Szechuan Chili Crisp (\$15). A drizzle of this chile oil created by a Chengdu-based chef makes just about everything taste better. Szechuan chile peppers provide the heat; the "deep savoriness" comes from mushroom powder, seaweed, and fermented black beans.

Bulldog Worcestershire Sauce (\$10). Put aside the Lea & Perrins for this Japanese alternative. It's thicker, slightly sweeter, and just better, "thanks to its blend of fruit and veggies, including apple juice, prune, and tomato paste, and plenty of garlic and onions."

Oo'mame Mexican Chile Infusion (\$16). An Asian-style chile oil made with chipotles and other Mexican peppers, this is great on wings, corn, or carne asada.

Kumana Avocado Sauce (\$8). Whatever you're dressing up, "you can't go wrong with creamy avocado accompanied by the zip of jalapeños."

Boon Sauce (\$18). Another great addition to burgers or steaks, this small-batch chile oil made in Los Angeles contains fried garlic, shallots, and anchovies.

Bullhead Barbecue Sauce (\$15). A staple at every Chinese hot-pot table, this "deeply savory" fish, shrimp, sesame, and garlic paste is a very versatile marinade.

Nong's Khao Man Gai Sauce (\$17). The signature sauce of a young Thai-born, Portland, Ore.-based chef might be "the perfect complement to chicken."



A can of Bullhead

The 2021 Chevrolet Trailblazer: What the critics say

Detroit Free Press

Chevrolet's new subcompact crossover might be 2020's most unexpected hit. The reborn Trailblazer, whose nameplate last appeared a decade ago on a three-row SUV, has been "flying off dealer lots," clocking a faster delivery-to-sale time during Covid than any other vehicle in America. Credit a combination of looks, features, and comfort that only Mazda matches in this segment. And Chevy's entry also offers best-in-class rear cargo room.

Motor Trend

Both available engines are turbocharged three-cylinders, and the upgrade is "a salty

little thing" that "makes the car feel punchy and responsive," even though at highway speeds the 155-hp three-banger "runs out of breath" while passing. And while the ride can be "a little rough and a little loud," the spacious, well-equipped interior makes the Trailblazer pleasant to travel in. "Its misses are small, but its wins are big, and Chevy's hit the segment right on the head."

Autoblog.com

Chevy already sells the pint-size Trax, though, and "the Trailblazer isn't trailblazing anything": It's "decent at most things but doesn't stand out," with a combined fuel efficiency of 28 to 31 mpg and a price that



America's fastest-selling car, from \$19,000

jumps quickly if you choose all-wheel drive or the better engine. "Perhaps what's most important is that Chevy finally has a tiny crossover that's easy on the eyes."

The best of...masks for children



Vistaprint

Vistaprint's durable contoured masks cup the chin and have adjustable ear loops and nose pieces to ensure a perfect fit. They also have a filter pocket, triple-layered fabric, and a wide array of patterns, including stripes, daisies, planets, and dinosaurs.

\$13, vistaprint.com

Source: FastCompany.com



Cubcoats

Known for making adorable stuffed animals that transform into hoodies, Cubcoats now also sells cotton masks that give kids the adorable faces of cartoon puppies, tigers, kittens, or bears. The masks have a shapable metal nose piece and a pocket for a filter.

From \$13 for 2, cubcoats.com

Source: People.com



Jaanuu

Jaanuu, a medical apparel brand, makes masks with a breathable, moisture-wicking scrubs fabric that has been treated with silver ions to prevent bacterial growth. The child-size masks feature soft ear loops and come in 15 colors and patterns.

\$25 for 5, jaanuu.com

Source: NYMag.com



Gap Kids Unisex Face Mask

Gap's cotton poplin masks are simple and relatively affordable. "The triple-layer accordion design is breathable but still provides coverage," and there's an adjustable nose wire built in. Available in nearly 20 patterns.

From \$7.50 for 3, gap.com

Source: Today.com



Socialite SuperSoft Mask

If tight straps are a problem, try Socialite's soft polyester masks, which accept filters and feature adjustable, elastic-free ear loops. They also happen to look stylish, especially in tie-dye, "the hottest trend of the summer."

\$14, socialiteclothing.com

Source: Good Housekeeping

Tip of the week...

How to prep for a hurricane

- **Trim trees.** Branches can damage your house when whipped by the wind, so prune weak and encroaching branches in advance.
- **Call your insurance company.** Check your coverage. You can boost it through the National Flood Insurance Program.
- **Secure important documents.** Birth certificates, tax records, and the like should be copied and stored, and the originals put in a waterproof and fireproof container.
- **Invest in a generator.** "A generator doesn't have to break the bank," especially if it'll be powering just a few essential appliances.
- **Check drainage.** Clear gutters and drains, and if you have a sump pump, check that it's working and consider adding a battery backup system.
- **Armor the windows.** If you live near the coast, keep half-inch plywood on hand that's cut to size. Use Plylox carbon steel clips to secure the boards and they'll be reusable.

Source: The Washington Post

And for those who have everything...

This summer has been surreal, and people are dressing the part. Following passing obsessions with tie-dye,

roller skates, and bike shorts, bored and lonely online shoppers have found another "downright silly" statement piece to show off: **Coddies Fish Flip Flops.** Available in several varieties—including pink salmon, blue tuna, and silver mackerel—the plastic novelty shoes have been swimming across social media recently. Our pandemic brains are apparently susceptible to the therapeutic rewards of frivolous shopping and partaking in trends. "But you don't need an excuse to buy fish flip-flops. If you're going to wear slippers at home, why not make them silly?"

\$24, coddies.com

Source: Vice.com



Best apps and websites...

For college and high-school tutoring

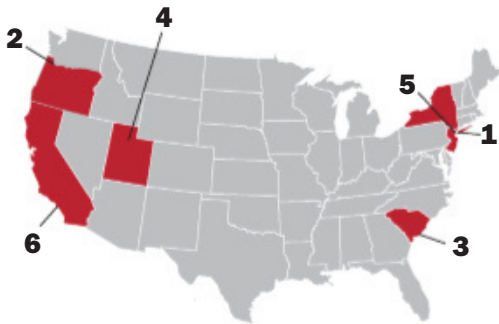
- **Chegg** doesn't just rent out textbooks. The 15-year-old company also connects students with tutors versed in hundreds of subjects. Rates start at \$7 per lesson, with a \$15-a-month option for tutoring via instant messaging or \$30 for tutoring via video chat.
- **Varsity Tutors** offers private and group instruction, dedicated test prep, and even a customizable homeschooling package. Private lessons cost about \$70 an hour, but the tutor quality and array of learning tools "make Varsity a big winner in our eyes."
- **Skooli** charges 82 cents a minute—making it perfect for quick help with a math problem.
- **The Princeton Review** focuses on preparing students for major tests such as the SATs, ACTs, and MCATs. "It's on the expensive side" but reliably boosts scores.
- **Wyzant** lets tutors set their own rates, and students can prescreen instructors. Most sessions cost \$35 to \$60 an hour.

Source: DigitalTrends.com

This week: Homes in lofts



1 ◀ Brooklyn Renovated by architect Rafi Elbaz, this four-bedroom condominium is in Williamsburg's iconic Esquire Building, once a shoe-polish factory. The unit features 18-foot ceilings and views of the Williamsburg Bridge and Manhattan skyline, and is updated with sustainable materials. The building has a geothermal climate system, rooftop terrace, and composting center, and is steps from Domino Park, shopping and restaurants, and the ferry. \$3,800,000. Iris Dauber-Elbaz, Douglas Elliman, (646) 752-7823



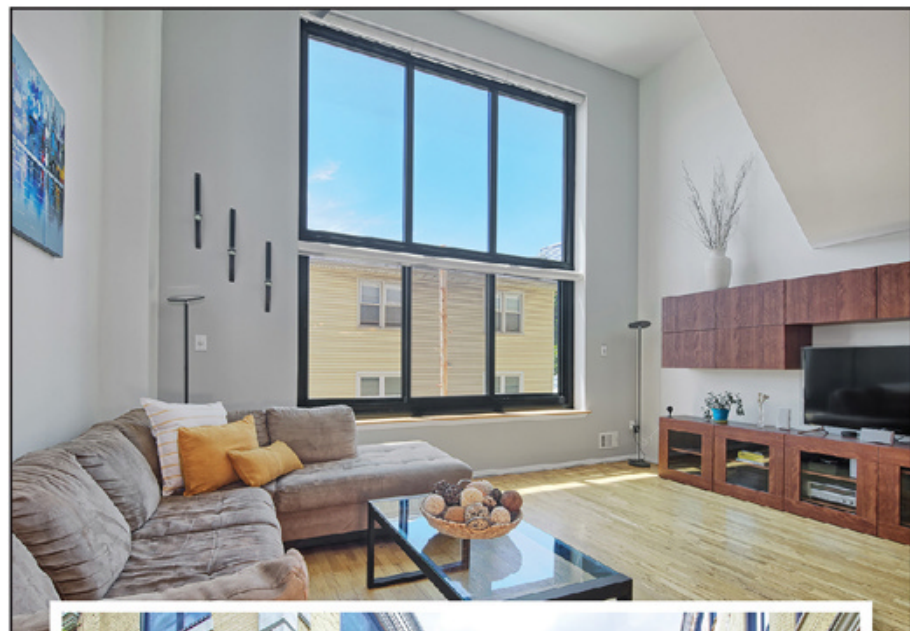
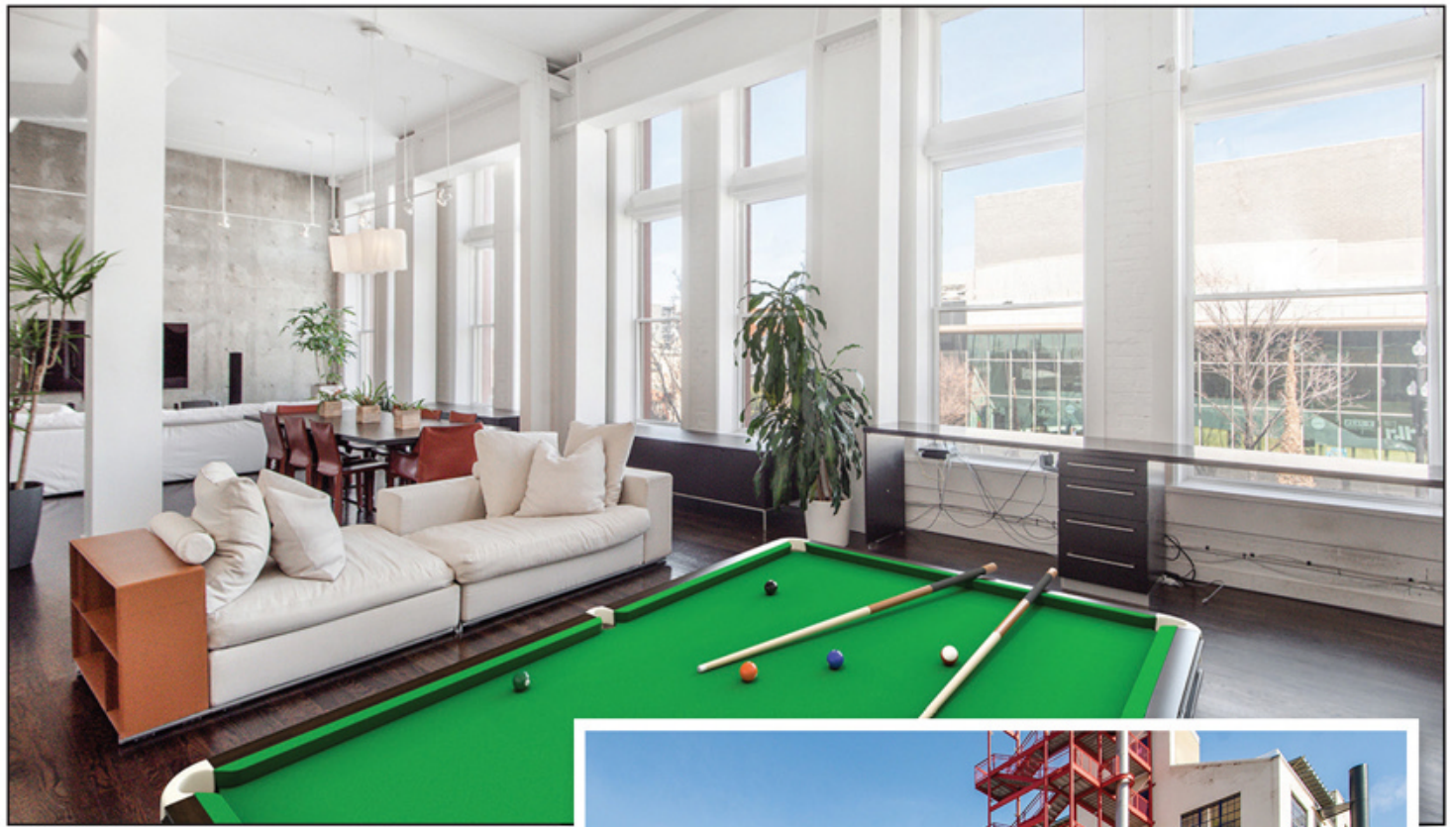
2 ▶ Portland, Ore. Architect Jeffrey Lamb's design for this two-bedroom brick townhouse in the Pearl District was inspired by industrial-loft conversions. The home, which was featured on HGTV, has high ceilings, rough-hewn French mahogany floors, track lighting, oversize windows, and an open layout connecting the living room, dining area, and eat-in kitchen. French doors open to two rooftop patios with city and park views. \$1,425,000. Melissa Lee, Windermere Real Estate/Luxury Portfolio International, (503) 294-1101



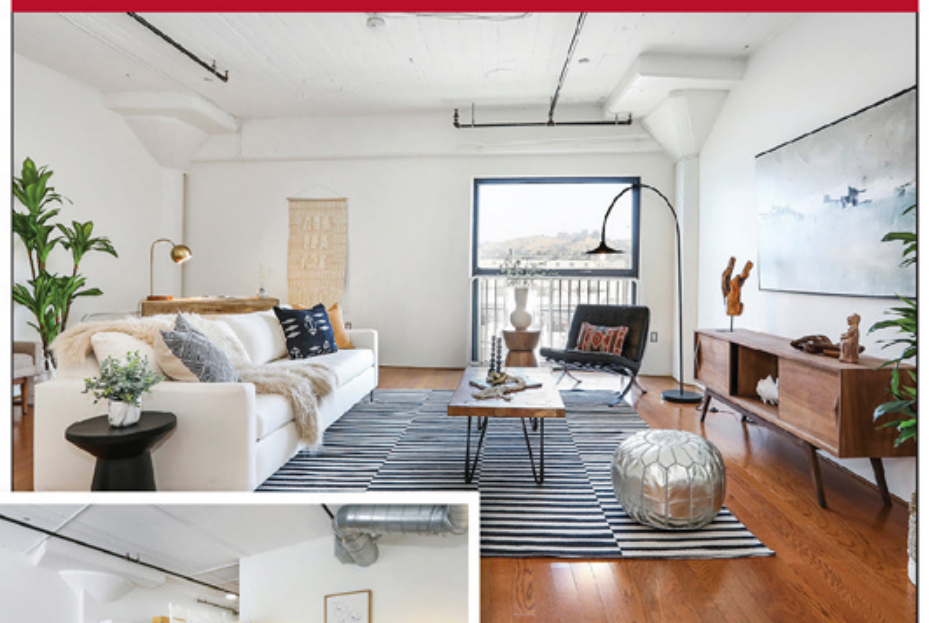
3 ▶ Charleston, S.C. This two-bedroom loft occupies the two upper stories of an 1890 retail building in the heart of historic Charleston. The home features vaulted ceilings, a skylight, built-ins, exposed brick, hardwood floors, two gas fireplaces, a library, and a renovated kitchen with designer backsplash. Outside are a private garden, a guest cottage, and a rooftop terrace with city views; nearby are museums, shops, and award-winning dining. \$2,900,000. Laura Wingate Farish, Maison Real Estate, (843) 670-2412



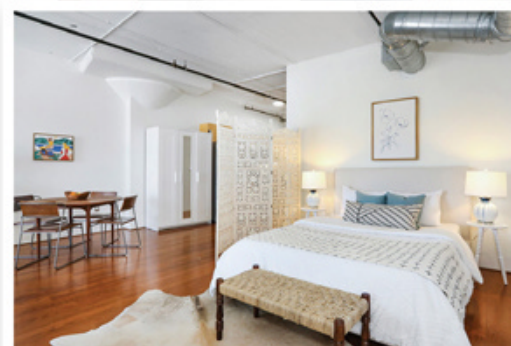
4 ► Salt Lake City Set in a former chocolate factory, this three-bedroom unit retains many industrial details. The 2,500-square-foot main floor features 15-foot ceilings, floor-to-ceiling north windows, concrete walls, hardwood floors, track lighting, pillars, an open layout combining living and dining rooms and gourmet kitchen, a hidden second bedroom, and a skylit floating staircase leading to the second-floor master suite. The building's downtown location is within walking distance of museums, restaurants, and Temple Square. \$1,895,000. Molly Jones, Coldwell Banker Realty, (801) 910-8410



Steal of the week



5 ▲ Weehawken, N.J. Gregory Commons was once the pot-and-pan factory of 1920s pioneering businesswoman Sophie Blickman. This two-bedroom condominium has 25-foot ceilings, a two-story living-room window, a master suite with walk-in closets and private bath, an open chef's kitchen, and Lower Manhattan views. The building includes a shared garden courtyard, an indoor pool, a lounge, a fitness center, and 24-hour concierge service, and is close to shopping, restaurants, Reservoir Park, and the New York ferry. \$589,500. Angela Cuciniello, Coldwell Banker Realty, (201) 657-6084



6 ▲ Los Angeles The 1920s Art Deco building that housed the W.P. Fuller Paint Co. was renovated by Brooks + Scarpa. This one-bedroom corner unit features high textured-concrete ceilings, drum pillars, exposed piping, an updated kitchen, a stacked washer-dryer, and hillside views, and comes with a parking space. The building is convenient to Chinatown, Los Angeles State Historic Park, the Los Angeles River Bike Path, and Dodger Stadium. \$460,000. Jovelle Schaffer, Sotheby's International Realty, (213) 718-1110

The news at a glance

The bottom line

■ Apple became the first U.S. public company to pass \$2 trillion in value. It was also the first to exceed \$1 trillion—a mark reached just two years ago. *CNBC.com*

■ Almost 16 percent of Federal Housing Administration loans were delinquent in the second quarter, up from about 9.7 percent in the previous three months, and the highest level in records dating back to 1979. *Bloomberg.com*

■ The median rent for a one-bedroom apartment in San Francisco in July dropped by 11 percent from last year. In Cupertino, home to Apple, and Mountain View, home to Google, rents fell by more than 15 percent. *The Wall Street Journal*

■ Home Depot sales rose 23 percent in the second quarter, fueled by the home-buying and do-it-yourself renovation craze. The company spent about \$480 million on additional benefits

for employees required to work in stores and warehouses amid the health crisis. *Reuters.com*



■ Citibank filed a lawsuit against Brigade Capital Management, seeking to recoup \$175 million it wired the hedge fund by mistake. The bank says it intended to send about \$1.5 million in interest payments on a loan Brigade made to troubled cosmetics company Revlon. Other Revlon creditors also received erroneous payments, adding up to \$900 million. *CNN.com*

■ Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway bought 20.9 million shares of Barrick Gold valued at \$564 million last quarter. The move is surprising because Buffett has long been skeptical of investments in gold. *MotleyFool.com*

Stocks: Bear market ends with new record

The absence of a new stimulus bill hasn't kept the stock market from reaching new heights, said Evie Liu in *Barrons.com*. This week, the S&P 500 index hit a record high, exactly six months after its previous peak in February. The improbable rally seems to defy explanation, amid such "historic unemployment and bleak GDP figures." But forward-looking investors have seized on some signs of a turnaround. "The average American has about \$1,000 to \$3,000 more in bank accounts today than before the shutdown," thanks to stimulus checks and expanded unemployment aid, and most investors assume another federal economic aid package will get passed by October.



Stocks beat pre-Covid levels.

The S&P 500 record also reflects the dominance of a few Big Tech stocks, said Peter Eavis and Steve Lohr in *The New York Times*. Shares in the five largest publicly traded companies in the U.S.—Apple, Amazon, Alphabet, Microsoft, and Facebook—have risen "37 percent in the first seven months of the year, while all the other stocks in the S&P 500 fell a combined 6 percent." Americans have become more reliant on the tech giants in the pandemic, and they "now constitute 20 percent of the market's total worth, a level not seen by a single industry in at least 70 years." Investors are betting their outsized influence on the economy "will be unassailable for years."

Retail: Target surge driven by online orders

Target reported the strongest quarterly growth in its 58-year history this week, said Alistair Gray in the *Financial Times*. The big-box retailer saw "a 24 percent year-on-year rise in second-quarter like-for-like sales," driven by a tripling of e-commerce revenue as more Americans remained at home ordering "goods from video games to garden supplies." Surprisingly good earnings at Target and Walmart represent "one of the clearest signals yet" that the pandemic is "widening the gap between the strongest chains and their weaker rivals."

Oracle: TikTok's unlikely new suitor

Oracle joined the sweepstakes this week to buy TikTok before a U.S. ban takes effect, said Tom Krazit in *Protocol.com*, raising questions about what "a 43-year-old database company" wants with a social media property that's "almost completely irrelevant to its core business strategy." Oracle does run "one of the world's leading data-broker operations," and TikTok is a massive generator of data. Larry Ellison, Oracle's chairman, is "Trump's biggest fan in Silicon Valley," and may be more open than other buyers to the president's demand "that any deal involving TikTok result in the U.S. Treasury getting a cut."

Huawei: A tightening web of U.S. sanctions

The U.S. announced new sanctions this week that could deal Huawei a "mortal" blow, said Kathrin Hille in the *Financial Times*. Under the new restrictions, "no company worldwide would be allowed to sell semiconductors made using U.S. software or equipment" to the Chinese phone and telecom equipment company without a license. "Given the dominance of U.S. tools in certain segments of chipmaking," the rule amounts to "a blanket ban on chip sales" to the top Chinese smartphone maker. China called the measure "undisguised bullying."

Studios: Exec dismissed after affair, extortion claims

Longtime NBCUniversal executive Ron Meyer was ousted after an alleged extortion attempt related to a relationship with an actress, said Brent Lang and Gene Maddaus in *Variety.com*. The 75-year-old Meyer, who represented stars like Tom Cruise and Meryl Streep as an agent before heading Universal's film division for 18 years, said he "made a settlement, under threat, with a woman outside the company." Meyer said that others who learned of the settlement were attempting to extort additional money from him. The woman was revealed to be 28-year-old British actress Charlotte Kirk; Kirk "also had an extramarital affair with former Warner Bros. CEO Kevin Tsujihara," who resigned last year.

The tiny telcos scammers love

One Arizona man is responsible for "more government-imposter robocalls than any other phone company last year," said Ryan Tracy and Sarah Krouse in *The Wall Street Journal*. Nick Palumbo was arrested in January for serving as a "key conduit" between hundreds of millions of overseas spam calls that bilked U.S. consumers out of at least \$38 million. Able to handle 38,000 phone lines, Palumbo's operation allegedly earned \$266,000 a month. While lawmakers have pressured the bigger carriers to enforce better spam-blocking protocols, "two phone companies run by Palumbo are among dozens of little-known carriers" that contract with companies overseas and send the traffic on before a major carrier "makes the final connection to your phone." By leasing phone-switching equipment and software, it's possible to start a telecom company with as little as \$10,000.

Social Security: Trump takes aim at the payroll tax

A gambit from President Trump to pressure Congress into a payroll-tax holiday is sowing confusion across corporate America, said **Richard Rubin** in *The Wall Street Journal*. After Congress failed to agree on a stimulus package, the president “ordered Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin to allow the deferral of the 6.2 percent payroll tax on employees from Sept. 1 to Dec. 31” for workers making less than \$104,000 per year. Trump “wants Congress—where lawmakers in both parties have been reluctant to approve a payroll-tax cut—to forgive those taxes permanently.” That would add \$1,220 per year to the median taxpayer’s take-home pay. But there’s no guarantee that Congress will go along with the \$100 billion expense. While Trump has long desired a payroll-tax cut, without new legislation workers would have to pay it back. There’s no mechanism for that, leaving employers reluctant to participate.

Both parties have “come down hard against payroll-tax cuts,” but for workers they have real value, said **Stephen Kent** in *TheHill.com*. “Payroll taxes are the largest taxes two-thirds of Americans pay,” and they hit middle-income earners harder, because income above \$137,000 is exempt. George W. Bush and Barack Obama both cut or suspended payroll taxes during previous downturns. A tax suspension doesn’t fix all the problems with the payroll tax, but it’s a start.



Trump bypassed Congress to defer payroll taxes.

jobs. That’s why businesses are better off ignoring the policy, said **Diana Ransom** in *Inc.com*, instead of wading into this “minefield of tax issues.”

The biggest danger Trump’s plan poses is not to next year’s taxes, but to the long-term future of Social Security, said **Mark Miller** in *Reuters.com*. The 12.4 percent payroll tax, split evenly between employers and workers, helps fund our nation’s safety net, and Trump has made it clear he will “push for termination altogether” of the tax if he wins in November. If Congress won’t go along, it’s conceivable that the president could “continue to defer contributions under the emergency powers he is leveraging now.” Social Security is already in trouble, with the trust fund reaching exhaustion in 2035, and the real design here may be to “defund” it even faster.

What the experts say

Extra scrutiny for PPP borrowers

“Efforts to root out scammers in the two largest federal loan programs are sweeping up legitimate borrowers,” said Peter Rudegeair and Liz Hoffman in *The Wall Street Journal*. Lenders in the \$670 billion Paycheck Protection Program and \$374 billion Economic Injury Disaster Loan program are on “high alert” for malfeasance “because they can face repercussions for facilitating fraud.” Many of the unfairly suspected are sole proprietors or gig workers seeking relatively small loans. But the SBA has urged banks to “scrutinize business loans that are deposited into personal bank accounts.” One Dallas-based lawyer says he has heard from “hundreds of small-business owners whose bank accounts were frozen after receiving government loans.”

Colleges cut fees for virtual classes

Bowing to pressure from students and families, some colleges are cutting tuition for the coming semester, said Lilah Burke in *Inside HigherEd.com*. A diverse group of schools, including Princeton, Spelman College, Johns Hopkins, and Rowan University, are slashing tuition. The most common cut is 10 percent, but some schools are going much deeper.

Thomas University is offering a 30 percent

reduction. “The universities offering tuition discounts roughly fall into two categories:” selective schools with big endowments, and nonselective colleges that “need to cut tuition to stay competitive and attract students.” Some changes could turn out to be long-lasting; the pandemic “has tightened a squeeze on pricing” already affecting many colleges.

Higher costs for home refinancing

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac announced they will be raising fees for lenders on mortgage refinances, said Diana Olick in *CNBC.com*. Consumers are going to have to start paying more to refinance beginning in September, “which means it will basically apply to all refinances that aren’t already in process.” The increase will add 0.5 percent of the loan amount to the consumer’s cost, amounting to roughly \$1,400 on the average mortgage originated today. The two loan-buying entities made \$4.3 billion in profit in the second quarter with the housing market surging and mortgage interest rates at an all-time low. But there are also growing concerns about Fannie and Freddie’s ability to handle the 4 million borrowers who were granted temporary forbearance on their mortgages and will have to resume payments in a few months.

Charity of the week

In 2006, Zack Rosenberg and Liz McCartney were volunteering near New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Frustrated by the slowness and inefficiency of the traditional rebuilding process and inspired by the determination of residents in St. Bernard Parish, La., they founded the St. Bernard Project. Now known as **SBP (sbpusa.org)**, the organization has become a national leader in disaster recovery. SBP has eight active recovery projects across the U.S., provides resilience training to owners of at-risk homes and businesses, and advocates for policy innovations in disaster response. Since its start, SBP has mobilized more than 130,000 volunteers and rebuilt homes for more than 2,140 families, and it is currently preparing to deploy additional teams for this year’s hurricane season.



Each charity we feature has earned a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator, which rates not-for-profit organizations on the strength of their finances, their governance practices, and the transparency of their operations. Four stars is the group’s highest rating.

Elections: What a Biden economy could look like

If you're wondering what a Biden presidency would mean for the economy, look to Biden's last financial crisis, said **Jeffrey Taylor** in *Bloomberg.com*. In 2009, as vice president, Biden approached the crisis from a middle-class, Rust Belt viewpoint, aggressively pushing for an auto bailout while championing tighter restrictions on banks and arguing against Wall Street in key debates. While today's situation is obviously different from the Great Recession, Biden sees "common threads" that could help him pursue an agenda focused on addressing income inequality and promoting public works. His top priority is a massive \$3.5 trillion infrastructure, manufacturing, and clean-energy program "that appears likely to grow substantially if he is elected." He plans to pay for the program by raising the corporate tax rate from 21 percent to 28 percent and increasing taxes on wealthy real-estate investors. In the wake of the pandemic, Biden has "edged away from the moderate economic approach he advocated last year," but he is still not likely to "embrace punitive demands from the Left."

"There is nothing 'moderate' about Biden's tax plan," said **Mark Bloomfield** and **Oscar Pollock** in *The Wall Street Journal*. For taxpayers with income above \$1 million, Biden wants to tax capital gains as ordinary income. Combined with an upper-income tax increase, that would make top capital gains tax surge from the current 20 percent to 43 percent, exceeding the rate in "every one of the 10 largest economies." We are not going to compete with China by adopting "tax policies that discourage those who are best able to invest, take risks, and start companies."



Biden: Drawing on lessons from 2009

Certain industries are sure to be in Biden's crosshairs, said **Anne Sraders** in *Fortune.com*. "Trump's fight to lower drug prices will likely be carried on," meaning "potential headwinds for Big Pharma." And energy and "environment-sensitive industries" such as oil and gas production could underperform under a Democratic administration. But the naming of Kamala Harris as his vice-presidential nominee "might actually be good for Big Tech" because of her ties to Silicon Valley. For the first time in a decade, Wall Street donors are actually giving more to Democrats than to Republicans, said **Jim Zarroli** in *NPR.org*. Trump "still has friends in finance," but many investors have "soured on his management style," which makes it hard for them to make long-term plans.

Whatever the outcome, investors are starting to worry about "stock-market mayhem" surrounding the November election, said **Gunjan Banerji** and **Gregory Zuckerman** in *The Wall Street Journal*. "Markets tend to be volatile ahead of elections," but pessimism about what might unfold appears "even more intense this time around." One adviser is urging clients to insure themselves against losses by buying options that will profit if the S&P 500 index plunges more than 25 percent through December; other firms are telling clients to bet on gold. The behind-the-scenes anxiety is unfolding even as markets hit a record high. "October and November tend to be the wildest months of the year" in any case, and market uncertainty could skyrocket if in the days after the election there is no clear winner.

Big Tuna, the industry that ate itself

Seth Stevenson
Slate.com

A price-fixing scandal has left the canned tuna industry in shambles, said **Seth Stevenson**. Consumers' tastes have changed since canned tuna was "a staple of the American pantry." But that's not all that "upended a century-old industry." In 2015, just three major players in tuna canning remained worldwide, and two were set to merge when Chicken of the Sea struck a deal to buy Bumble Bee. But when the Department of Justice launched an antitrust review, the agency found the three companies "had all been in cahoots," illegally fixing prices. Facing the threat of the "longer-term trend toward fresher food," Bumble Bee's CEO

Chris Lischewski had "tried to call a truce" with his rivals to keep prices up. He also stood to reap \$40 million in profits if the company looked attractive enough to get sold. But Lischewski tried to blame the scheme on two underlings, who testified against him at his trial. Lischewski was sentenced to more than three years in prison. Bumble Bee declared bankruptcy "and was soon after bought by a Taiwanese fishery." Now all three brands are based in Asia, closer to where the fish are caught. In the U.S., they are quickly losing what few customers they had left. "One tuna executive said he doesn't think Millennials even own can openers."

A marriage neither of us can leave

Zachary Karabell
Foreign Policy

"The United States and China are not in a cold war," said **Zachary Karabell**. "They are in a bad marriage, with no current option for divorce." Forget the facile analogies between today's discord and the rivalry between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. The "Chinese-U.S. economic relationship is so much more connected and intertwined than the U.S.-Soviet one ever was." During those Cold War decades, trade between the two countries was "all but non-existent." By contrast, even with President Trump's tariffs, bilateral trade in goods between the U.S. and China is expected to be around \$450 billion to \$500 billion this year. China also holds \$1.1 trillion

in U.S. securities, while hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of capital stock or factories in China are owned or maintained by U.S. companies. This economic "superfusion" since China joined the World Trade Organization has its pitfalls. U.S. manufacturing has taken a hit, but consumers have "benefited from cheaper products that made middle-class life more affordable." So why does the language of the Cold War still persist? It's true the bickering between the countries has certainly gotten worse. But "unless either China or the U.S. finds a spare \$5 trillion to \$10 trillion to rebuild completely independent supply chains," we will still need each other.

The hard-driving media mogul who lived to win

Sumner Redstone
1923–2020

Sumner Redstone parlayed a family drive-in theater business into a vast media empire. A pugnacious entrepreneur who coined the phrase “content is king,” he used hostile takeovers and myriad lawsuits to amass holdings that included Viacom, CBS, Paramount Pictures, Simon & Schuster, and cable channels such as MTV and Nickelodeon. At his peak, Redstone held assets worth over \$80 billion, a fortune he didn’t compile without ruffling feathers. With a hot temper and self-described “unlimited capacity for confrontation,” Redstone burned through top executives, dismissed Tom Cruise from his Paramount deal for erratic behavior, and clashed publicly with family members. As doggedly determined as he was ruthless, Redstone survived a 1979 fire at a Boston hotel by hanging from a third-floor window ledge as flames seared his flesh. He dismissed the notion that he’d been changed by the experience. “I have a passion to win,” he wrote, “and the will to win is the will to survive.”

Sumner Rothstein was “raised in a Boston tenement” by a housekeeper mother and a father who sold linoleum from the back of a truck and “later owned a restaurant, nightclubs, and drive-in theaters,” said *The Washington Post*.



Fear of anti-Semitism led his father to change the family name to Redstone in 1940. A “studious overachiever” who ranked first in his high-school class, Redstone attended Harvard on a scholarship, earning a law degree and embarking on a “lucrative law practice.” Bored by the law, in 1954 he took a massive pay cut to work for his father’s theater business, scouring New England and “acquiring properties for the growing chain,” said *The Hollywood Reporter*. In the 1960s, the family pioneered the building of multiplex theaters, amassing more than 120 by the mid-’70s.

Recognizing that home video and cable TV “would hurt the theater business,” he borrowed heavily and acquired Viacom in 1987, said the *Los Angeles Times*. He bought Paramount in 1994, and at age 77 acquired CBS in 2000 for \$37 billion. His later years were marked by poor health and declining fortunes as “cable cord cutting eroded the value of Viacom.” After a former girlfriend alleged in a 2015 lawsuit that he’d lost his mental capacity—if not his daily appetite for steak and sex—he stepped down as chairman of Viacom and CBS but kept his controlling stake in the media group’s holding company. “I have no intention of ever retiring,” he said in 2009, “or of dying.”

Farewell

These are some of the people, famous and not, who have recently died from Covid-19.

Barbara Costikyan, food critic for *New York* magazine who wrote about the city’s low-budget, high-quality restaurants and offered advice on how to troubleshoot kitchen problems—if your oven breaks on the day of a party, heat that ham in the dishwasher—died June 18, age 91.

Steven dePyssler, Air Force colonel who served in World War II, the Korean War, the French Indochina War, and the Vietnam War, and became a tireless volunteer after retiring, helping young airmen manage their finances and advising widows and widowers on veterans’ benefits, died July 25, age 101.

Helen Jones Woods, trombonist in the International Sweethearts of Rhythm—a pioneering all-women, multiracial jazz band that toured the country in the 1930s and ’40s—who gave up music in the 1950s after being fired by the Omaha Symphony when management realized the light-skinned Woods was black, died July 25, age 96.

James ‘Tootie’ Robbins, hard-hitting offensive tackle who spent 10 years with the Cardinals in St. Louis and Phoenix and played his two final NFL seasons, 1992 and ’93, with the Green Bay Packers, died Aug. 2, age 62.

Yolanda Coar, nurse manager at Georgia’s Augusta University and mother of two who was working on her master’s degree in nursing, died Aug. 9, age 40.

James Harris, a 6-foot-7, 380-pound Mississippi sharecropper and truck driver who later found fame in the professional wrestling world as Kamala, the “Ugandan Giant” who menaced opponents in the ring, died Aug. 9, age 70.

Trini Lopez, singer and actor who mixed folk, Latin, and rockabilly on 1960s chart hits such as “If I Had a Hammer” and “Lemon Tree” and who starred in the 1967 war movie *The Dirty Dozen*, died Aug. 11, age 83.

The tennis player who broke the color barrier

Robert Ryland
1920–2020

Robert Ryland was a dominant force at tennis tournaments in the 1940s and ’50s—when he was allowed to compete. As a black player, he was banned from the major U.S. championships and prohibited from challenging white contemporaries on the segregated professional circuit. Armed with a powerful serve and low-flying slice shot, Ryland excelled in the blacks-only American Tennis Association, winning the men’s singles titles in 1955 and ’56. In 1959, promoter Jack March invited him to appear at the World Pro Championships in Cleveland. Ryland—in his late 30s and past his prime—lost his debut match 6-0 to Brazil’s Armando Vieira. But he earned \$300 for competing, making him the sport’s first black pro player. Ryland would spend the next six decades as a tennis coach; one pupil was Arthur Ashe, who in 1968 became the first black man to win the U.S. Open. “Looking back,” Ryland said, “I’ll always wonder if I could have made it big.”

Born in Chicago, Ryland was 2 years old when his mother died of tuberculosis, said *The Washington Post*. He went to live with his grandmother in Mobile, Ala., where he picked cotton



with his great-grandfather, a former slave, “and watched the Ku Klux Klan murder one of his cousins.” At age 10, Ryland returned to Chicago, and his father, a postal clerk of Irish and Native American descent, began teaching him tennis. At Wayne University in Detroit, “Ryland became one of the first two black players to compete in the NCAA national championships,” said the Associated Press. He had to sneak into whites-only hotels where his college teammates were staying if he didn’t want to sleep on the bus.

After his breakthrough match in Cleveland, Ryland “didn’t last long on the pro circuit,” said *The New York Times*. “I had only exposed myself to black tennis,” he said in 2019, “and we didn’t have that type of competition.” He went on to become a sought-after coach, instructing future tennis stars including Leslie Allen, Harold Solomon, and Venus and Serena Williams. Ryland, who played in local competitions into his 80s, also taught celebrities such as Tony Bennett, Dustin Hoffman, and Barbra Streisand. His pupils vouched for Ryland’s unsung talent. “My only dream in tennis,” Ashe said, “was to become good enough to beat Bob Ryland.”

Choosing to be alone

Before Covid, young South Koreans were already escaping social pressures by staying home, said journalist Ann Babe in RestOfWorld.org. Now others are following them into an increasingly isolated culture.

THE DAY KIM Hye-min threw up on the job while working as a graphic designer at a small broadcasting firm in Seoul, she was so overwhelmed by stress that it made her sick to her stomach. When a senior co-worker shamed her for being just a few minutes late, it echoed what she had heard from older South Koreans all her life: She wasn't good enough. At lunchtime, she made a run for the restroom stall.

"The criticisms kept building up," she says, until she reached the point where she didn't think she could take it anymore. For 26-year-old Hye-min, as for many young South Koreans, life choices feel forced and fixed—and not like actual choices at all. Many feel so beaten down by the rigid social and professional demands of their country that they refer to it as "Hell Joseon," a play on Korea's old dynastic name. The path is especially bleak for young women, who must contend with the nation's deeply rooted misogyny. Deviation from the mainstream is widely viewed as disobedient, and sometimes, in the eyes of older generations, even unpatriotic.

"It's something to do with Korean society," Hye-min says. "There's only one way to engage in relationships with others, or one type of person who's considered acceptable. And for people like me, it's really hard."

Hye-min never understood why she should have to rush through a school system that did nothing but judge and rank her, only to find a lifelong position at a company that would do the same. She dropped out of university for a year before transferring, sought counseling for her battered self-esteem, and quit her job, despite knowing that all these choices would be looked upon as failures.

Perhaps toughest of all, Hye-min knew that even if she were to achieve "success," it was unlikely she'd be compensated fairly for it: South Korea's gender wage gap is the worst in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with men earning on average 32.5 percent more than women.



Hye-min: Uploading my cartoons 'was a release of all the feelings I had inside.'

Her parents would ask, "Hye-min, why can't you be like other women your age and find a nice man and get married?"

Hye-min, however, has no plans to get married. Nor does she expect to have children. After years of being told she must strive to be a good student, good employee, good wife, and good mother, she eventually decided she no longer wanted to partake in a system that ties her social currency and self-worth to such a punishing status quo. So Hye-min opted out. "Why do I have to continue on, going through these difficulties?" she says. "For what?"

In traditionally collectivist South Korea, individualist loners, or *honjok*, are becoming increasingly common. The term, which translates to "alone tribe," shortens and combines 나홀로, meaning "by myself," and 족, "tribe." It's used to describe a group of people who prefer, out of pleasure or practicality—and, often, utter exhaustion and sheer desperation—to live outside of conventional social structures and simply be alone.

WITHIN SOUTH KOREA'S hyperactive cyberculture of online forums, blogs, and social media, an entire taxonomy has sprung up to classify, in ever greater detail, various *honjok* identities and activities. Many *honjok* are *honyeo*, or solitary women, and some *honyeo*, like Hye-min, are *bihon*, meaning they reject marriage and often child-rearing. There are also 4Bs, who take the ethos even fur-

ther by rejecting sex and romantic relationships. When *honjok* eat alone, it's called *honbap*, and when they drink alone, it's *honsul*. They can also play alone (*honnol*), which might include traveling alone (*honhaeng*), going to the movies alone (*honyeong*), or shopping alone (*honsho*).

All of this contributes to a booming *honconomy*. Banks offer single-household credit cards. Bars and restaurants promise solo patrons judgment-free service, and *honjok*-specific establishments set partitioned tables just for

them. Specialized karaoke joints feature individual coin-operated booths. Cinemas install single-seat aisles. TV shows like *I Live Alone* and *Drinking Solo* portray *honjok* life, and news sites like 1conomy News exclusively cover single living.

While some *honjok* embrace the "hon" and truly go it alone, others turn to the "jok," the tribe of people like them, for support and validation. In communities both online and off, members strive to normalize the *honjok* life as a sign of modern times—a decision that is sensible and convenient, and if not something to celebrate, then at the very least nothing to be embarrassed about.

That *honjok* would need or want to look to others while isolating themselves may seem like something of a paradox. Yet for many young *honjok*, the appeal lies in partaking in "a sort of shared identity" while under pressure from a status-obsessed country, says Andrew Eungi Kim, a sociology professor at Korea University. "If you don't meet mainstream standards, you feel ashamed. With *honjok*, there is a sense of being a member of a group."

On King of Honjok, a community app and website, solitaires post photos of their daily lives, shop the marketplace for *honjok* wares, and peruse articles like "The trend these days is 'I live alone!'" and other content created specifically for them. They occasionally meet in person at King of Honjok events. Thirty-four-year-old co-founder Oh Jung-hee, who has been *honyeo* for the past

decade and sees her friends in person two to three times a year, says that in a society oriented toward families and couples, she started King of Honjok to help voluntary outsiders like her lead better lives. Whether they use it to be “independent alone” or “independent together” is up to them.

Kim Min-jung, a 34-year-old YouTuber, runs the channel “1 Person 2 Cats.” Min-jung says her vlogs about her bihon life are meant to encourage women who want to pursue a similar lifestyle but don’t know how. “Society doesn’t view bihon as a type of lifestyle,” she says. “It views it as an unfinished lifestyle.” Other bihon have even showcased their solo marriage ceremonies on social media, in order to inspire women who want to stay single—but still get the wedding gifts.

WHILE HYE-MIN’S PARENTS had always told her that she was the only person who felt the way she did, she suspected that wasn’t true. Surely, there were others like her searching for alternatives. In 2017, around the time she quit her job at the broadcasting company, she started channeling her thoughts into drawings and designs and created a cartoon documenting her struggles. After months of deliberating over whether to post them, she finally decided to do it.

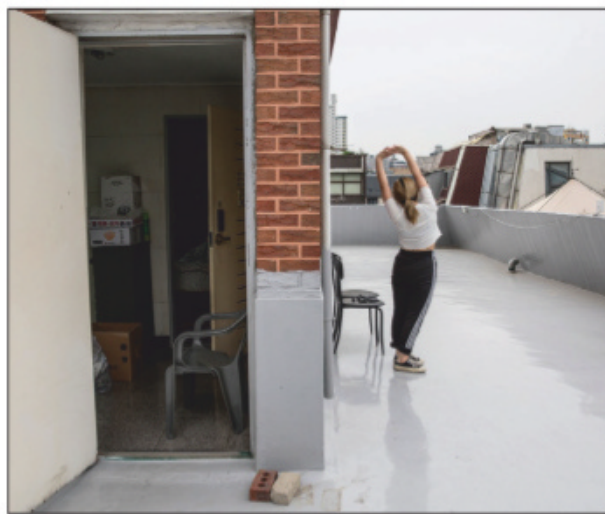
In 2018, Hye-min launched her Instagram account with the handle @nicetoneet and the pseudonym *nuguna*, meaning “anyone” in Korean. Her first drawing was of a girl curled up in a near-fetal position. There were no captions or hashtags. She hit share and waited for people’s reactions.

“When I finally uploaded, it was a release of all the feelings and thoughts I had inside,” she reflected. “It felt like I was being a whistleblower, like I was telling everyone the truth.” Over time, Hye-min grew more outspoken, with her cartoons addressing society’s incessant questioning about graduation, employment, and marriage. At every step, her protagonist tried to find her own way in the world and not simply do what was expected of her. One post depicted her stopping at a convenience store to buy alcohol to drink at home by herself. Another pictured a battery pack with the words: “The world was quiet and calm when I was alone in my own room. Like an old battery, I spent my energy quickly and charged slowly. I stayed until I was charged, and nobody judged my life. I loved this space and time.”

At first, so many commenters accused Hye-min of being lazy, weak, selfish, and a bad role model that she almost gave up on the project. She also felt a little guilty about it. “I still wasn’t sure if it was OK to live as

my own identity,” she says. But within three months, she’d amassed about 20,000 followers, which proved to her that it was.

In 2019, after many months of saving, Hye-min moved out of her parents’ home and got her own studio apartment on a quiet street in a popular student area. The idea of leading a life on her own terms, with her own routines and rituals, came as a relief. Hye-min’s compact 180-square-foot walk-up is on the top floor of an old building, whose best feature is its rooftop. Using the honjok section of an app called Today House, she bought a twin-size bed that folds up against the wall, a mini microwave,



Hye-min, exercising solo on her rooftop.

and an air fryer the perfect size for making a meal for one. She painted the walls slate gray, then hung a heart-shaped mirror and cloud-shaped neon light.

Most days, Hye-min fills her time drawing. She now has close to 40,000 followers and has published her webtoons in a two-volume book. When her working day is done, she’ll watch one of her favorite shows, such as *I Live Alone*, or whatever YouTube suggests—usually beauty tutorials and daily vlogs. When Hye-Min craves the spark of human energy, she’ll go to a café or the cinema or coin karaoke by herself, or will head up to her roof to look out at the surrounding thrum of the city.

THE RISE OF the honjok phenomenon has coincided with several worrying health and demographic trends. Since 2014, the number of young people in South Korea receiving treatment for depression has nearly doubled. In addition to increasing youth unemployment, the marriage rate and birth rate are at all-time lows. If nothing changes, according to government projections in 2014, South Korea will undergo natural extinction by 2750.

Despite such warnings, South Korea’s economy is now shifting toward the kinds of technologies that support a honjok lifestyle. Even before the country became the epicenter of Covid-19 outside of China, busi-

nesses had been developing a robust digital infrastructure for contactless interactions. This nascent “untact” industry (a combination of “un” and “contact”) enables customers to do things like order food, schedule taxis, make payments, and send gifts without any human interaction at all. More and more restaurants and cafés have replaced flesh-and-blood waitstaff with self-service kiosks and robots.

On a national scale, the government is staking the country’s economic reform and job creation on *untact*. In May, the president announced the “South Korean New Deal”: a \$64 billion program focused on investing in technologies that power contactless interactions, including remote work systems, high-speed internet and 5G, and self-driving cars, drones, robots, and other AI initiatives. Such developments underscore the government’s public campaign of “everyday-life quarantine”—its vision for a socially distanced future where regulations will be relaxed, but people will still be reminded that they should not go back to their pre-Covid-19 ways. As Kim, the sociologist, puts it: “The government constantly says, ‘You need to practice social distancing.’ They are indirectly saying, ‘Practice the honjok lifestyle.’”

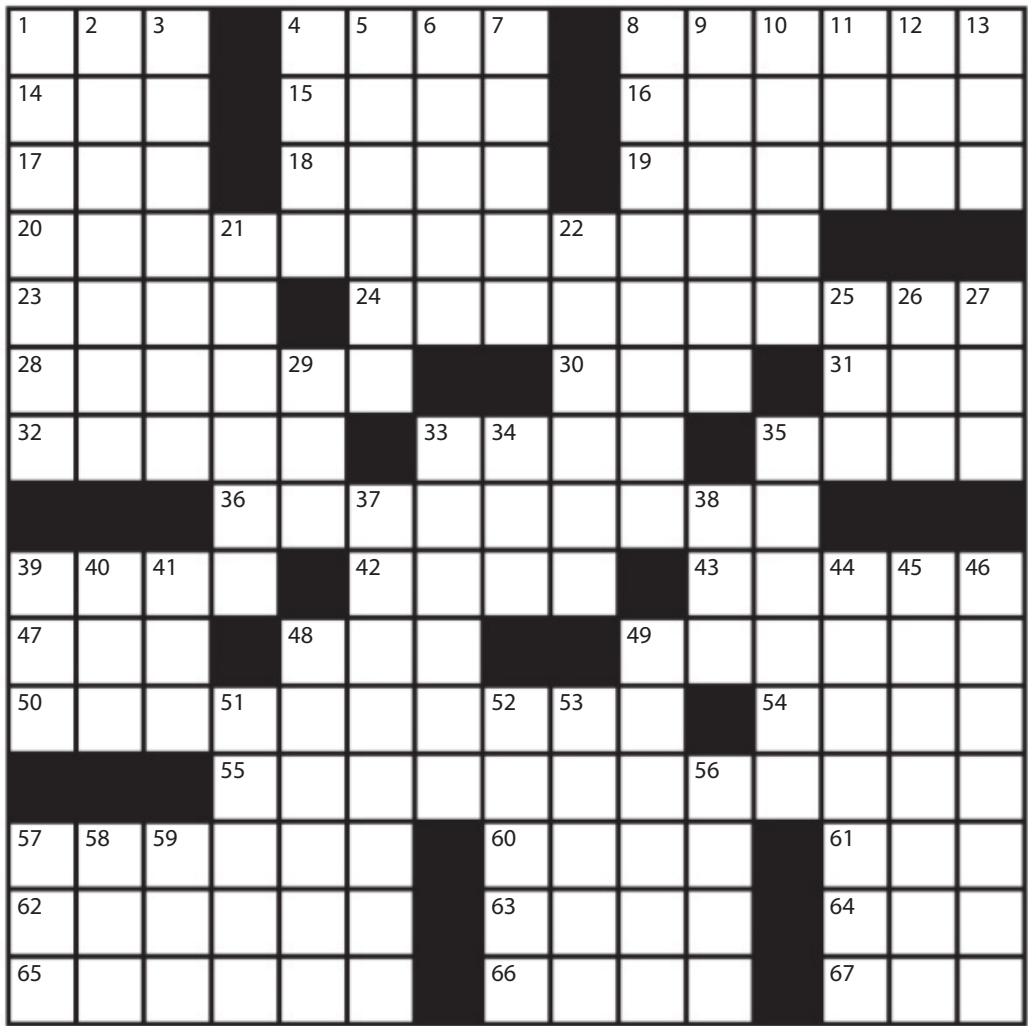
It seems that honjok, even if accidentally, anticipated the kind of contactless society that may soon be the norm. Indeed, for Hye-min, the reality ahead doesn’t look wildly different from life before the pandemic, at least in the day-to-day, hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute sense.

After Covid-19 struck, she says, “I just thought to myself, ‘Well, there’s nothing much I can do’ and headed home, watched YouTube videos, read books, and went on my smartphone, as I would normally do.” It wasn’t until later, when she was talking to a friend on the phone, that Hye-min realized how disruptive Covid-19 has been for those who don’t identify with honjok.

Of course, things have changed for Hye-min too. She worries about community transmission and her parents’ health. She wears masks and sanitizes her hands. At some point, she put a stop to her already infrequent visits to cafés, cinemas, and other crowded public spaces. Yet while the social restrictions were hard for many South Koreans, following them came naturally to Hye-min. She already thought of her space as a sanctuary. And for the foreseeable future, she thinks she’ll be happy staying at home by herself.

Adapted from a story that originally appeared in Rest of World (RestOfWorld.org). Used with permission.

Crossword No. 565: Triple-A Members by Matt Gaffney



- ACROSS**
- 1 ___ fly (baseball play)
 - 4 Gym event, maybe
 - 8 Stone mentioned in *Uncut Gems*
 - 14 Not online, for short
 - 15 Start for sphere
 - 16 Brand of beer with two apostrophes
 - 17 *Jack Ryan* org.
 - 18 Volunteer's words
 - 19 Muse of astronomy
 - 20 During a video meeting on Aug. 11, Joe Biden asked this senator, "You ready to go to work?"
 - 23 Stops
 - 24 Nighttime garments that often, for some reason, have a pocket
 - 28 *Chi-Raq* actor
 - 30 Congressman Crenshaw
 - 31 Squirrel's hangout
 - 32 Ease (off)
 - 33 Important street name
 - 35 Sacred
 - 36 Soft drink brand with a country map in its logo
 - 39 Moderately
 - 42 Spoken
 - 43 Life-form
 - 47 Pig's home
 - 48 Info often texted
 - 49 Flower associated with Mexico
 - 50 National capital that's fittingly home to the Bridge of the Americas
 - 54 Pair in *Dear Evan Hansen*
 - 55 Much of Chad
 - 57 Arizona language
 - 60 Like many mochas
 - 61 "___ would I want to!"
 - 62 How some baseballs are fielded
 - 63 "Well done!"
 - 64 Fashion designer Anna
 - 65 *Angie Tribeca* genre
 - 66 Oodles
 - 67 Key near the 1
 - DOWN**
 - 1 Most awesome, in teenspeak
 - 2 Webzine founder Huffington
 - 3 Party table stuff
 - 4 Collins whose "In the Air Tonight" went viral on YouTube earlier this month, thanks to a pair of teen bloggers
 - 5 Summarizes
 - 6 City south of Sioux Falls
 - 7 "Yikes" singer Nicki
 - 8 Foodie
 - 9 ___ VI (only Dutch pope)
 - 10 Event with zingers
 - 11 *The Sound of Music* extra
 - 12 Director Roth
 - 13 Baggage checkers
 - 21 Feature
 - 22 Tire type
 - 25 Tic-tac-toe win
 - 26 Bud
 - 27 Site for a kite
 - 29 Historian's time
 - 33 Shaken instrument
 - 34 Boise's county
 - 35 Whoopi Goldberg and Cheech Marin voiced two of them in *The Lion King*
 - 37 What goners have
 - 38 Grand slams earn four
 - 39 In-___ purchase
 - 40 Co-star of Estelle, Rue, and Betty
 - 41 Stop on the highway
 - 44 Aromatic sticks
 - 45 ___ oxide (laughing gas)
 - 46 Of the stomach
 - 48 Key used by Vivaldi in *The Four Seasons*
 - 49 Louisiana music
 - 51 Beer seen at sushi restaurants
 - 52 Supermodel Shayk
 - 53 Unstated
 - 56 Genesis location
 - 57 Rejecting replies
 - 58 Gasteyer of the 2019 Netflix film *Wine Country*
 - 59 Dye container

The Week Contest

This week's question: A lovestruck British man accidentally destroyed his home after he lit hundreds of tea-light candles in his apartment, poured two glasses of wine, and then went to fetch his girlfriend to propose. The couple returned to find the apartment engulfed in flames. If Hollywood were to make a romantic comedy about this hot love story, what should the film be titled?

Last week's contest: Murphys Irish Bar in Spain has removed Neil Diamond's "Sweet Caroline" from its music menu because patrons can't resist singing along, potentially spraying coronavirus-laden droplets around the bar. Please come up with the title of a pop song that would encourage people to adopt safe pandemic practices.

THE WINNER: "I Want You Back (About Six Feet)"
John Holler, Clearwater, Minn.

SECOND PLACE: "Can't Take My Mask Off for You"
Glen Alfredson, Durham, N.C.

THIRD PLACE: "Don't Sing So Close to Me"
Michael Rouse, Troy, Mich.

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to theweek.com/contest.

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, type "Burning love" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, Aug. 25. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, Aug. 28. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.



◀ The winner gets a one-year subscription to *The Week*.

Sudoku

Fill in all the boxes so that each row, column, and outlined square includes all the numbers from 1 through 9.

Difficulty: medium

		1	8	5	4			
	5					3		8
7			4	8		2		6
8		2				9		4
4			7	1	2			3
5							6	
	4	8	5	6	3	1		

Find the solutions to all *The Week's* puzzles online: www.theweek.com/puzzle.

©2020. All rights reserved.
The Week (ISSN 1533-8304) is published weekly with an additional issue in October, except for one week in each January, June, July, and September.
The Week is published by **The Week** Publications, Inc., 155 East 44th Street, 22nd fl., New York, NY 10017. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address to **The Week**, PO Box 37252, Boone, IA 50037-0252. One-year subscription rates: U.S. \$150; Canada \$180; all other countries \$218 in prepaid U.S. funds. Publications Mail Agreement No. 40031590, Registration No. 140467846. Return Undeliverable Canadian Addresses to P.O. Box 503, RPO West Beaver Creek, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 4R6.
The Week is a member of The New York Times News Service, The Washington Post/Bloomberg News Service, McClatchy-Tribune Information Services, and subscribes to The Associated Press.

Make your home more comfortable than ever

“To you, it’s the **perfect lift chair**.
To me, it’s the **best sleep chair** I’ve ever had.”

— J. Fitzgerald, VA

NOW
also available in
Genuine Italian Leather
(and new Chestnut color)



Pictured: Leather chair chestnut color. Chestnut color also available in Duralux fabric

You can’t always lie down in bed and sleep. Heartburn, cardiac problems, hip or back aches—and dozens of other ailments and worries. Those are the nights you’d give anything for a comfortable chair to sleep in: one that reclines to exactly the right degree, raises your feet and legs just where you want them, supports your head and shoulders properly, and operates at the touch of a button.

Our **Perfect Sleep Chair®** does all that and more. More than a chair or recliner, it’s designed to provide total comfort. **Choose your preferred heat and massage settings, for hours of soothing relaxation.** Reading or watching TV? Our chair’s recline technology allows you to pause the chair in an infinite number of settings. And best of all, it features a powerful lift mechanism that tilts the entire chair forward, making it easy to stand. You’ll love the other benefits, too. It helps with correct spinal alignment

and promotes back pressure relief, to prevent back and muscle pain. The overstuffed, oversized biscuit style back and unique seat design will cradle you in comfort. Generously filled, wide armrests provide enhanced arm support when sitting or reclining. **It even has a battery backup in case of a power outage.**

White glove delivery included in shipping charge. Professionals will deliver the chair to the exact spot in your home where you want it, unpack it, inspect it, test it, position it, and even carry the packaging away! You get your choice of Genuine Italian leather, stain and water repellent custom-manufactured Duralux with the classic leather look or plush microfiber in a variety of colors to fit any decor. **New Chestnut color only available in Genuine Italian Leather and long lasting Duralux. Call now!**

The Perfect Sleep Chair®
1-888-232-0132

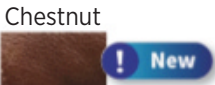
Please mention code 113700 when ordering.



REMOTE-CONTROLLED
EASILY SHIFTS FROM FLAT TO
A STAND-ASSIST POSITION

Footrest may
vary by model

Genuine Leather



Long Lasting DuraLux



DuraLux II Microfiber

Because each Perfect Sleep Chair is a custom-made bedding product, we can only accept returns on chairs that are damaged or defective.

© 2020 firstSTREET for Boomers and Beyond, Inc.